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**ST. LEONARD'S FOREST: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
CHANGE FROM 1750 TO 1914 AND ITS IMPACT ON A
FOREST LANDSCAPE**

by

Margaret Mary Weir-Wilson,

**A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirement for the degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Sussex

September 2013

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:

Margaret Mary Weir-Wilson

Frontispiece



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Every effort has been made to identify copyright and gain proper permission, but if any have been missed please accept my apologies and note that I would be pleased to rectify this.

University of Sussex

Margaret Mary Weir-Wilson

Doctor of Philosophy

**ST. LEONARD'S FOREST: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE
FROM 1750 TO 1914 AND ITS IMPACT ON A FOREST LANDSCAPE**

SUMMARY

This thesis is concerned with the changes to a forest landscape, that of St. Leonard's Forest, Horsham, West Sussex, changes that were wrought by human activity over two and half centuries. In order to uncover and understand these changes the author has focused on five private estates within the Forest core, Holmbush, Buchan Hill, St. Leonard's, Coolhurst and Leonardslee, and two villages in the Forest, Colgate and Lower Beeding.

The five estates are considered with regard to ownership and control, land use and workers on the estates. The two villages are examined for their growth, the profile of the population, poverty and wealth. The establishment and endowments of the parish churches are outlined along with the development of the parish of Lower Beeding and its ties to Magdalen College, Oxford. Paternalism was a theme in the Victorian and Edwardian period, and the 1900 Footpath Dispute demonstrated a move away from these attitudes towards a more individualistic concern with private property rights.

For the first time this study pulls together the numerous and complex strands which make up the landscape history of St. Leonard's Forest. It explores the factors both social and economic which impacted on the Forest. The juxtaposition of the nearby expanding market town of Horsham with its large common, improving communications, sales of land, and the attitudes of individual Forest landowners all combined to transform the Forest from a wild barren heathland in 1750 to a place of desirable picturesque estates and expanding villages by 1914, before the impact of the Great War was to change the Forest landscape yet again.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

St. Leonard's Forest is a strange place, a dark and gloomy forest landscape in which it is too easy to lose one's way by taking a wrong path. Its history seems to hang heavily amongst the heathland and trees and yet little is really known about it locally apart from myth and legend. One is reminded of Kipling's poem 'A Way through the Woods' which conjures up a ghostly atmosphere which chimes well with St. Leonard's Forest:

Yet, if you enter the woods
Of a summer evening late
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,
And the swish of a skirt in the dew
Steadily cantering through
The misty solitudes,
As though they perfectly knew
The old lost road through the woods....
But there is no road through the woods.¹

The present author came to live near this Forest on the edge of Horsham 13 years ago and wanted to know more about it. So began a journey on that 'other path' of academic discovery, 'the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference', as hopefully this thesis will demonstrate.²

The introduction will aim to give context to this thesis by first outlining the main reasons for researching St. Leonard's Forest, Horsham, West Sussex, and follow this with the questions that needed to be answered in order to give shape to the research.

¹ Keating, P. (ed.) (2000) *Rudyard Kipling: Selected Poems*, London: Penguin Books Ltd., p. 133.

² Frost, R. (2011) *The Road Not Taken*, *The Robert Frost Collection*, Blacksburg, VA: Wilder Publications, p. 109.

The chapter will then continue with an account of the current ownership, ecology, geology, topography and archaeology needed to locate and understand the subsequent historical research and analysis. A concluding paragraph will then outline the following chapters of this thesis.

In undertaking any research into a forest it is worth stating at the beginning that in common parlance a forest is understood to be woodland, or a plantation of trees. The concept of a forest, in the legal sense, was introduced in the early medieval period by William I who brought the practice from Normandy. At this time in England the land was already held by individuals, not necessarily by the King, so the forest legal system was established to protect the deer of the forest for the sport of the monarch so that he or she could keep, hunt and kill the deer. The King's deer were usually introduced to an area and stayed, without the need for the hedge and ditch, fence and pale of a park, with pollarding and grazing forming a woodland pasture landscape. However, there could be conflicts with the existing residents of an area, with regard to their customary rights to graze animals and collect wood. Resentment was caused where the welfare of the deer and boar appeared to override that of the populace. Myths grew up telling of the cruelty and injustice, the depopulation and enclosure imposed on the Anglo-Saxon people by the oppressive Norman monarchy. Schama blames medieval clerics such as Oderic and Walter Map for starting the myth that whole villages and parishes were swept away to create the New Forest as a private hunting reserve for William I. The legend of Robin Hood, Schama suggests, is linked to this myth of sylvan liberties where all was well and just in the English greenwood before Norman tyranny.³ However, in the Ashdown Forest, Sussex, disputes did arise over restrictions to commoners' rights and attempted enclosures in the mid-17th century and again in the 19th century.⁴

³ Schama, S. (1995, 2004) *Landscape and Memory*, Hammersmith: HarperCollins Publishers, p 140.

⁴ Short, B. (ed.) (1997) *The Ashdown Forest Dispute 1876-1882*, Lewes: Sussex Record Society, Vol. **80**, pp. 20-28.

The nature of the royal forests differed in that they could be in many types of landscape, wooded, moorland or heathland depending on the underlying geology and topography but most were situated near royal estates. If the King granted a forest to a subject then it became a chase, and the Forest Court was not heard by the King's Justices but by lesser Swainmote Courts. Parks were set up for specific purposes within forests and chases and hence were bounded by a pale. St. Leonard's Forest was not a royal forest but a chase, held after 1066 by the Lords of Bramber, the de Braose family, although the existence of an outer pale around St. Leonard's Forest cannot be currently confirmed through archival or archaeological evidence.⁵

1.1: Why study St. Leonard's Forest?

This thesis investigates the social and economic pressures and influences, both national and regional, which impacted upon the people and communities of St. Leonard's Forest, West Sussex. It considers how these changes affected the landscape in which people lived, which in turn affected the communities in terms of resources, work and culture. The period chosen is a long one, from the mid-18th century to the beginning of the 20th century, 1750 – 1914. This covers war and peace, economic recession and recovery, popular uprising such as the Swing riots, smuggling, and the gentrification of both gardens and gardeners. For the farm labourer it saw a complete change from paternalistic and customary labour organisation to a fully capitalist, modern, economic exchange reliant on the cash-nexus. The perception of the landscape of the Forest changed too from what many, like Cobbett, saw as 'a most villainous tract', a miserable, undervalued depleted heathland and scrub of the late 18th and early 19th century to the desirable, romantic and isolated real estate of the later 19th century and early 20th century.⁶ Enormous change characterises the study period, but continuity also exists in the face of this change, and the research identifies

⁵ Rackham, O. (2006) *Woodlands*, London: Harper Collins, pp. 141-3, and James, N.D.G. (1981) *A History of English Forestry*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 1-17.

⁶ Cobbett, W. (1830) *Rural Rides*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, p. 113.

both continuity and change in the landscape and lives of the St. Leonard's Forest communities.

In 2005 Chatwin and Gardiner published an article in the journal *Landscape History* asking for a rethink of the early medieval settlement of woodlands. Although this current thesis covers a period of research that is later than their interest, the point they make remains that not all forests and woodland have developed in the traditional, assumed manner. It is likely that all five forests of the Sussex weald forest ridge have their own unique histories. Worth Forest, which included Tilgate Forest, was contiguous with St. Leonard's Forest and although the geology was similar, aspects of the social and economic development were different, such as the early establishment of Worth Priory in the Forest, near the Surrey border and village of Crawley. Ashdown Forest is geologically and topographically different in that it is on sand and silt and is the highest part of the weald with higher rainfall and poorer drainage than the other forest ridge forests. Unlike St. Leonard's Forest it was a Royal hunting forest then a free chase, with around its fringes tenants of the Manors of Duddleswell and Maresfield with commoners' rights, rights which have been well defended over the centuries. It is therefore a useful exercise to research in detail specific forests and woods and draw out the unique aspects of their history. There is, however, a lack of recent research into St. Leonard's Forest, its communities and landscape which this research study aims to fill in order to inform about the development of this particular forest landscape.⁷

Where a gap exists in local historical knowledge, such as with St. Leonard's Forest, it is important for the community that their unique heritage, particularly knowledge of a forest heritage, is not lost or undervalued. Also, as interest and necessity grows in creating resilient communities with sustainable futures, the knowledge of how things

⁷ Chatwin, D. and Gardiner, M. (2005) Rethinking the early medieval settlement of woodlands: evidence from the western Sussex Weald, *Landscape History*, **27**, pp. 31-49, and Brandon, P.(2003) *The Kent and Sussex Weald*, Chichester: Phillimore and Co. Ltd., pp. 22-3, 203.

were done in the past, how people earned a living from their local environment and its resources, what worked and the skills associated with their use, is valuable knowledge that should not be lost for lack of interest or research. The knowledge gained can also have an impact on planning and conservation, which is particularly important in the context of local forests which are under continuing threat of being mismanaged or sold. For example, with regard to St. Leonards Forest, new knowledge of the archaeological remains of pillow mounds which are associated with rabbit husbandry should impact on the management by the Forestry Commission in their areas, and perhaps knowledge of the historical garden legacy of Coolhurst could also impact future decisions.

An initial difficulty in planning research into the historical development of St. Leonard's Forest was in identifying a boundary to this forest landscape. There was no ancient pale, and the modern Forest was much reduced. However, in their research into the forests of England and Wales Langton and Jones had delineated an approximated inner core of St. Leonard's Forest (see figure 1.1).⁸ This boundary could therefore be used to focus upon the three main estates in the Forest which became five in the 19th century, plus the two main villages of Colgate and Lower Beeding (see figures 1.1 and 1.2). In addition to the boundaries of the Forest, the exact boundaries of the estates have been difficult to pin down without estate maps, only the later maps attached to sales particulars and the 1910-15 Land Valuation Survey maps have been useful in this. Hence the map at figure 1.2 is very much indicative of the estate boundaries and not exact, with small areas north, west and south probably falling outside these particular estates.

⁸ St. John's College, Oxford website accessible though: <http://info.sjc.ox.ac.uk/forests>.

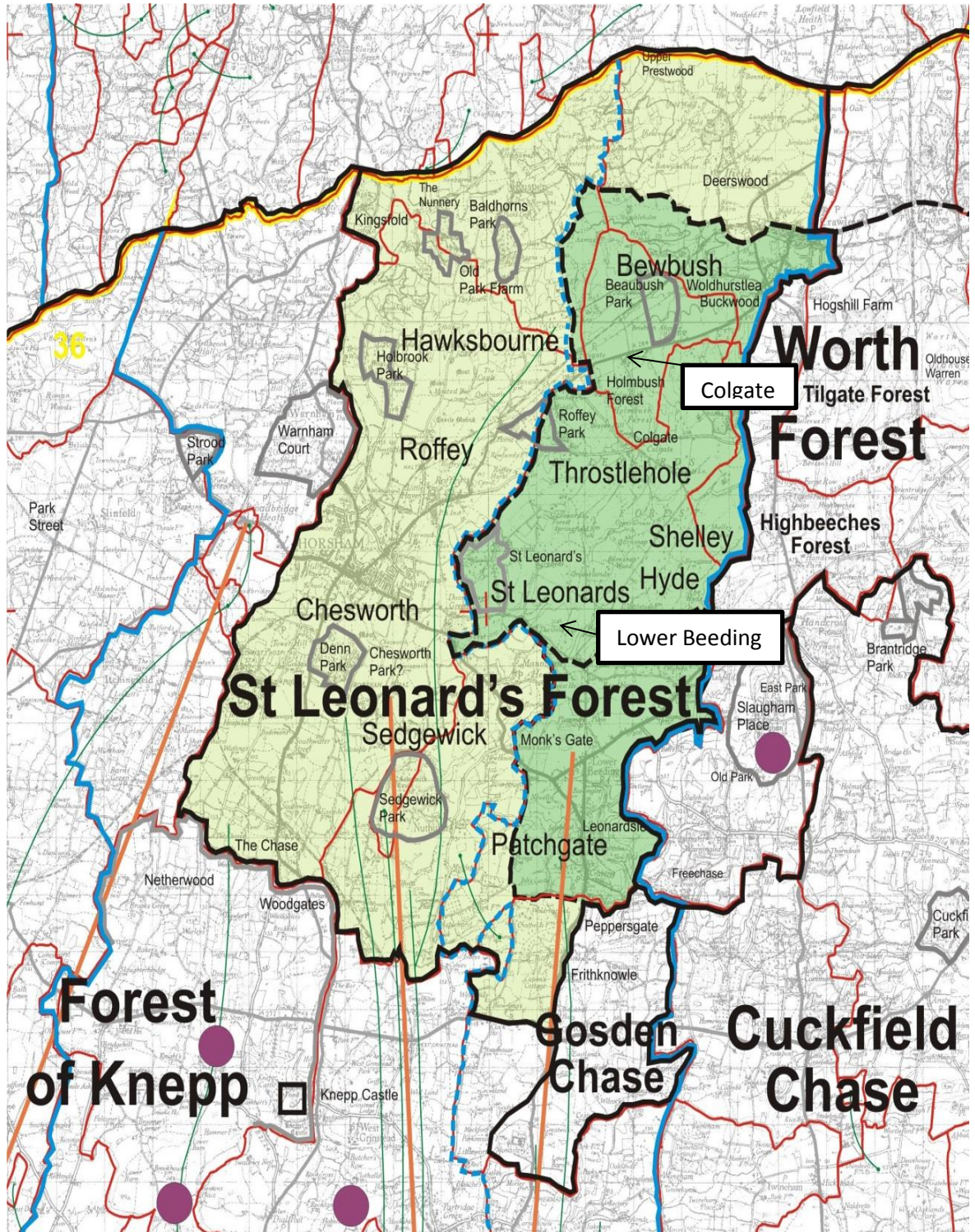


Figure 1.1: Map created from information given by Langton and Jones in figure 2.1 and adjusted by author with the assistance of Dr Steve Morris to indicate boundary of present study in dark green, the core of the Forest, and likely greatest extent of the Forest in lighter green.

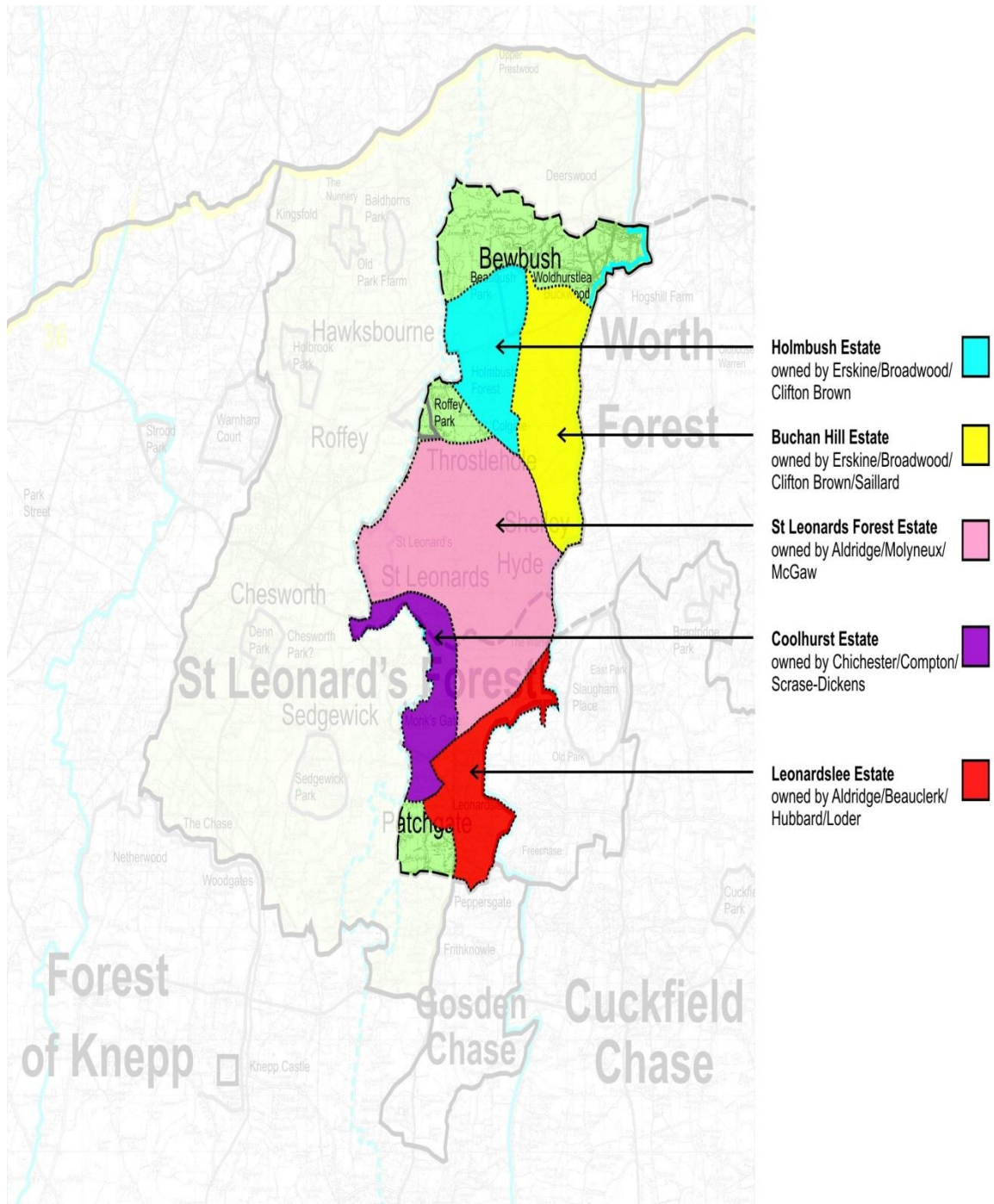


Figure 1.2: Approximate position of the 5 estates within the core of St. Leonard's Forest. Boundaries changed over time and with ownership, so this is indicative rather than actual. Light green areas to the north, west and south probably fell outside these particular estates and therefore have not been included in this thesis.

Once the boundary of the Forest, or at least the area determined for this study, was decided upon an examination of documentation, primary and secondary sources, with field trips to the Forest, aimed to produce some historical insight and understanding of the period under study, and answer the following research question:

What were the social and economic factors through which St. Leonard's Forest, Horsham, changed from a devalued heath and secondary woodland in 1750, to a highly valued area of private estates with gardens, forest and lakes by 1914?

In order to answer the above question, it was considered that the following supplementary questions would assist in structuring the research:

- What was the state of the Forest in 1750? What were its boundaries, settlements, people, type of landscape and use?
- Did the Parliamentary enclosures affect the Forest and in what ways?
- What was the impact of the French and Napoleonic Wars and subsequent agricultural depression on the Forest economy?
- How far did a cultural appreciation of the picturesque encourage the creation of gardens and parkland and the replanting of the Forest?
- Who exactly lived in the Forest, landowner, farmer or villager; and how did they live? What sort of settlements were in the Forest, hamlets, villages or isolated farms, and were there temporary charcoal burners' bivouacs? How did this change over time?

1.2: The Forest and current ownership

St. Leonard's Forest lies to the east of Horsham and south west of Crawley, West Sussex, approximately 20 miles from Brighton on the south coast and 40 miles from London (see figure 1.3 for approximate position). There are two main villages that lie

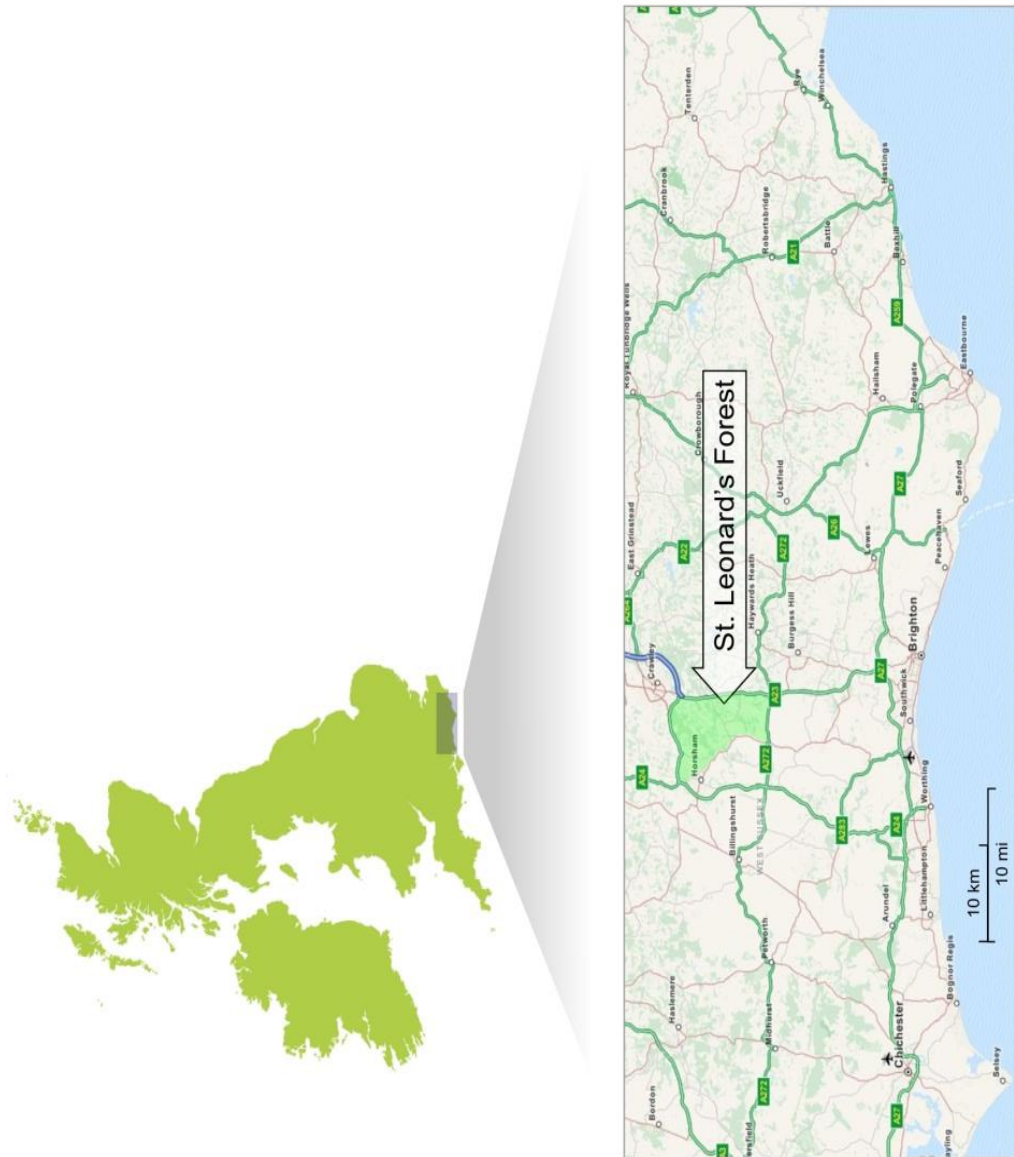


Figure 1.3: Map showing approximate position of St. Leonard's Forest in UK and Sussex. By kind permission of Dr Steve Morris.

within the Forest, Colgate in the north on Forest Road, and Lower Beeding to the south of Plummers Plain on Sandygate Lane (B2110). Today much of the Forest is in varied private ownership such as private estates, schools, farms, gardens and golf clubs and so closed to general public access. However, a portion is retained by three public bodies; West Sussex County Council in the north owns 69 ha (170 acres) of Buchan Country Park, and to the south Horsham District Council owns areas identified as Leechpool, Owlbeece, Severals Bottom, and Forest Walk making about 45 ha (110 acres), all of which is managed by their Countryside Services Unit.

The middle section of the Forest which includes Sheepwash Gill, Mick's Cross, and the Lily Beds, a total area amounting to 289 (714 acres) is owned by the Forestry Commission and under the management of Natural England. All these areas are still open to the public with good access through car parks, footpaths and rights of way. Two long distance walking trails cut through the Forest, the High Weald Landscape Trail runs east beginning at Horsham station for 94 miles to Rye, and the Sussex Ouse Valley Way begins just south of Lower Beeding and runs 42 miles to Seaford Bay on the coast. A useful sketch map was produced in 1983 by Horsham Natural History Society and reproduced here for clarity of boundaries, footpaths and areas of interest, although Lower Beeding village is not marked and lies just south of Plummers Plain (see figure 1.4).

ST. LEONARD'S FOREST

The Nature, Conservancy
Site of Special Scientific Interest

Nature Reserves

Footpaths

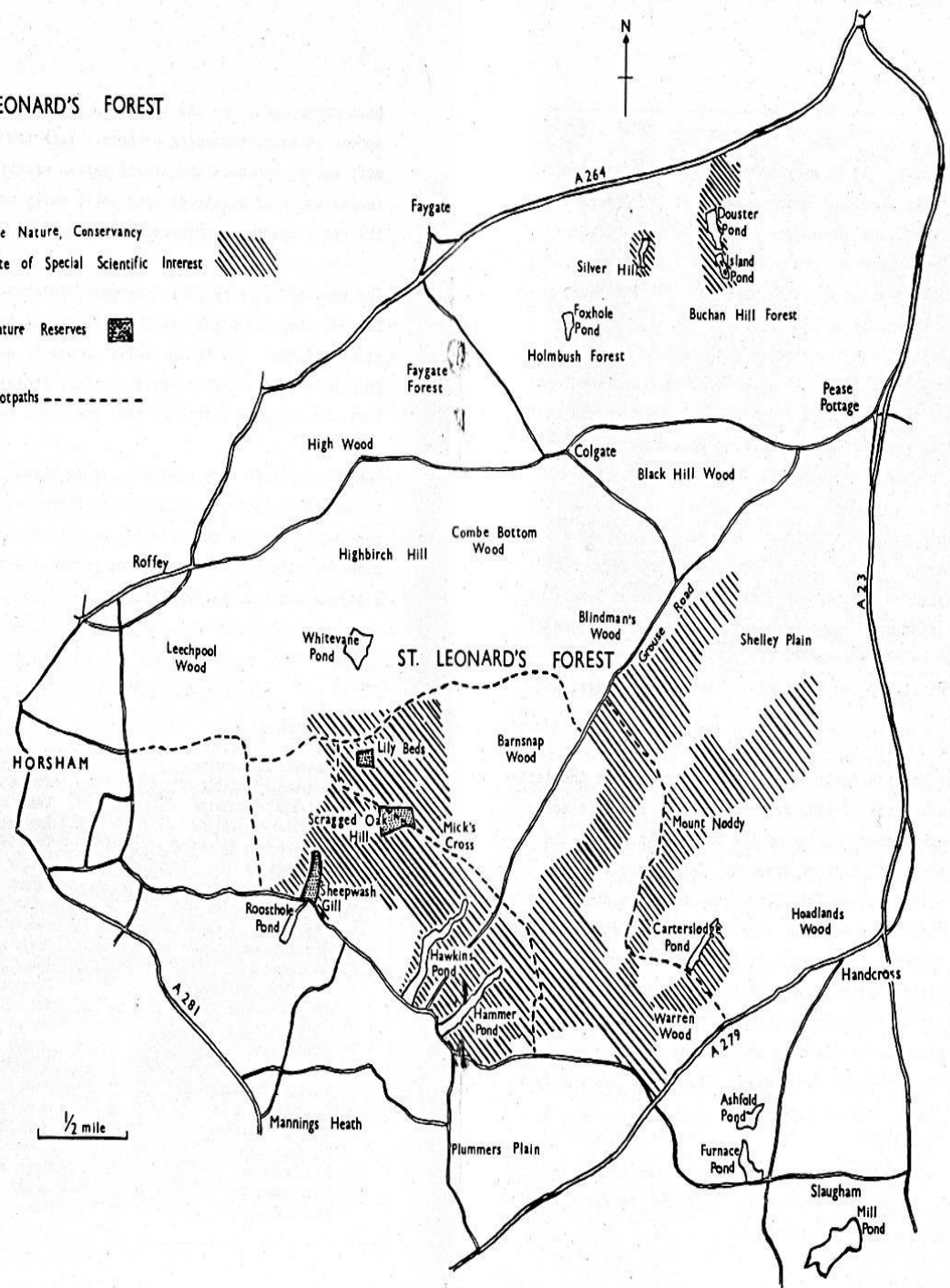


Figure 1.4: Reproduced sketch map of the current St Leonard's Forest by Horsham Natural History Society in their booklet *Natural History of St. Leonards Forest* 1983, Editor Norman Fryer, pp. 22-3.

1.3: Ecology and Environment

The ecology and environment of St Leonard's Forest has undergone changes in the 20th century due to the ownership of part of the Forest by the Forestry Commission with its original policy of planting pines for timber, so today the landscape differs again from that of the study period. The Forest lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and features three main Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (see figure 1.5). St. Leonard's Forest SSSI is made up of three units of broadleaved, mixed and yew lowland woodland covering 70 ha (172 acres) and one unit of standing open water (Hawkins Pond) covering 5 ha (12 acres). The second SSSI area is St. Leonards Park Ponds, situated in the grounds of St. Leonard's Lodge and consisting of two units of standing open water (Golden Folly Pond and Dry Pond) together covering 3 ha (7 acres). The third SSSI area is again ponds, this time to the north of the Forest in Buchan Country Park known as Buchan Hill Ponds, three ponds covering 19 ha (46 acres).⁹

These SSSIs were all designated in 1954 for a variety of reasons. The main St. Leonard's Forest SSSI remains a remnant of more extensive deciduous forest with varied vegetation. In the woodland can be found bracken, bramble, honeysuckle, bluebell, primrose, and common violet, while at the Lily Beds site is a colony of wild lily-of-the valley, although sadly depleted following the use of Forestry Commission heavy machinery. On the upper sandy ridges there is heathland vegetation, ling, cross-leaved heath and ivy-leaved bellflower, however, the heathland is much reduced from its 18th and 19th century extent.

The woodland in this central part of the Forest is mainly pedunculate oak, beech, and the two common birches, with an understory of holly, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn and

⁹ Hectares will be used when modern measurements are given, otherwise with reference to archives before a metric system of measurement was adopted in 1971, acres will be adhered to. Conversion is 1 acre = 0.414 ha.

guelder rose. Scots pine and Corsican pine have been planted in plantations over much of this site, particularly to the east and have encouraged an unfavourable habitat. Relict flora such as mosses and liverworts from the 'Atlantic' period some 5000 years ago survive in the microclimate of Sheepwash Gill, which indicate continuous woodland since this time. At the time of designation there was a population of the purple emperor butterfly, and the supporting habitat is still regarded as favourable for this species. A diversity of woodland birds including three types of woodpecker, nightjar, redstart and wood warbler were originally identified, and it is assessed by Natural England that restoring the pine plantations to broadleaf woodlands would assist their continued habitat.

St. Leonard's Park Ponds were originally designated by Natural England as an SSSI due to the species rich nature of the wooded ponds which supported the variable and ruddy darter damselfly, and the downy emerald and brilliant emerald dragonflies. However, when it was reassessed in 2009 the conditions were regarded as unsuitable for supporting a good dragonfly population due to the margins being overshadowed by willow scrub, large rhododendron bushes and two stands of bamboo. One of the ponds is heavily stocked with carp and used by a fishing club.

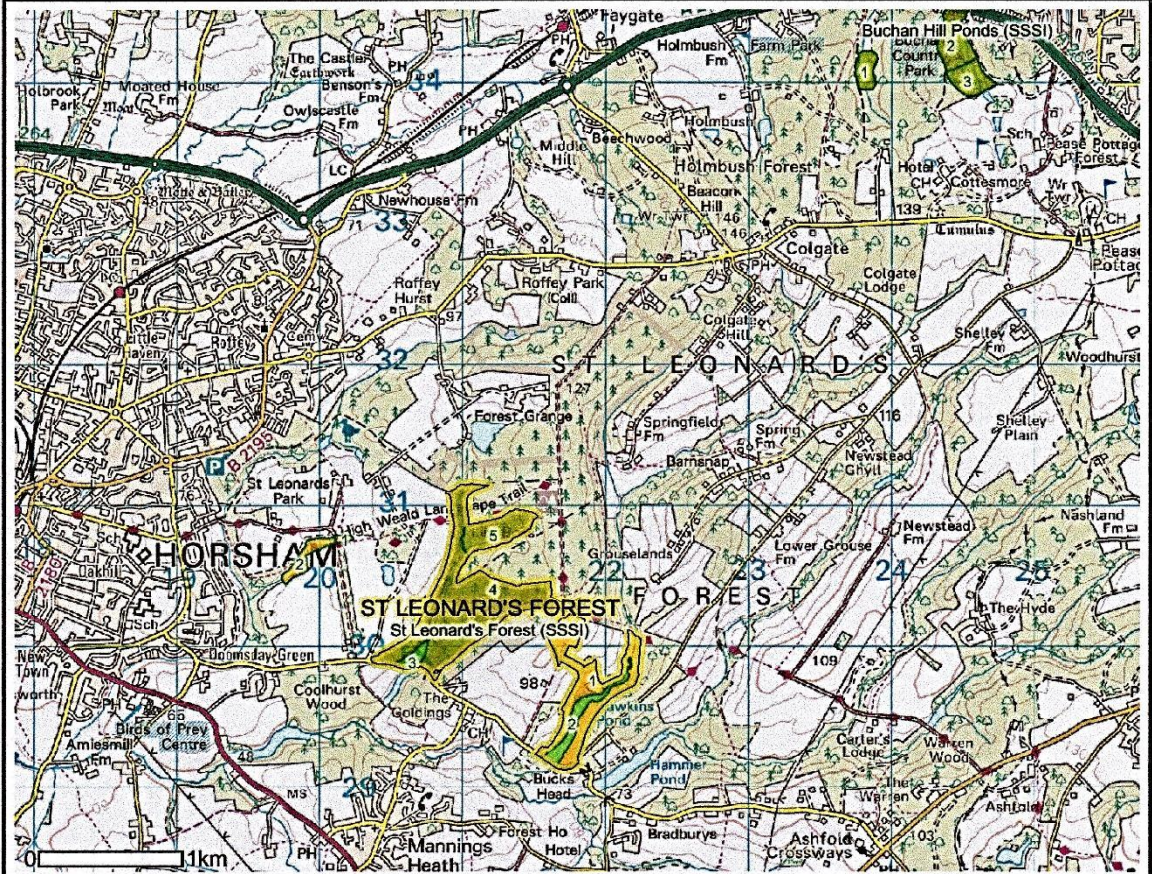
Buchan Hill Ponds were designated due to the fact that these three ponds were 'the best example in West Sussex of Wealden hammer ponds on acid Tunbridge Wells sands', plus they had unusual wet woodland and seventeen different species of dragonfly which was identified as a nationally significant population. This area was last inspected in November 2009 and the habitat found to be unfavourable due to invasive plants but recovering following work to control the rhododendron and other conservation management tasks.¹⁰

¹⁰ Natural England website, accessible through: www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk.



Nature on the Map

St Leonard's Forest SSSI



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- * Natural England Offices
- Selected Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- SSSI Live Management Agreements
- SSSI Unit condition - last updated 18 Apr 13
- Favourable Condition
- Unfavourable Recovering
- Unfavourable no change
- Unfavourable Declining
- Part Destroyed
- Destroyed
- Not Assessed
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Natural England Regions
- Natural England Area Teams
- Scotland, Wales and Ireland
- Ordnance Survey background mapping
- England

Figure 1.5: Area of modern St. Leonard's Forest with three SSSI sites indicated in green. Accessible through Natural England website: www.natureonthemap.org.uk

1.4: Geology, Topography and Archaeology

To understand the historical changes in the landscape over two centuries it is important to know the underlying geology of the area on which the social action occurs. It has a crucial impact on the agriculture, industry and activities that are economically and socially viable in the study area. The geology and topography of St. Leonard's Forest can partially be explained by the physiographic, or natural regions, of Sussex (see figure 1.6). Horsham lies on the western edge of the High Weald and so the Forest falls completely within this region. The natural regions are based on the underlying geology which in the case of the High Weald is the Hastings Beds, which consist of three main subdivisions, Ashdown Beds, Wadhurst Clay and Tunbridge Wells Sand. As can be seen on the geological map for the Horsham area (see figure 1.7) the Forest lies on the Upper Tunbridge Wells sand band, an area of high ground running from Felbridge to Horsham in a 5 kilometre-wide band with a gentle north-north westerly dip. Outcrops of this sandstone are estimated to be of a thickness of up to 75 metres in St. Leonard's Forest and form distinguishable scarp and dip-slope features.

To the north of the Forest the sandstone ridges are dissected by the rivers Arun and Mole, and similar sandstone outcrops can be found at Roffey, Colgate and Shelley Plain, with a contrast between light sandy soil and a silty mudstone. To the south of the Forest, and west of Mick Mills Race, clay-ironstone can be found amid greater dips and faulting of the underlying rock. The Forest is a watershed not only for the Arun and the Mole to the north, but for the headwaters of the Adur and Ouse to the south. The sands and clays give rise to a very distinctive forest landscape of high flat forest ridges with heathland and sparse woodland, cut through by headwaters forming deep wooded ravines or 'ghylls' in which mosses and liverworts continue to thrive.

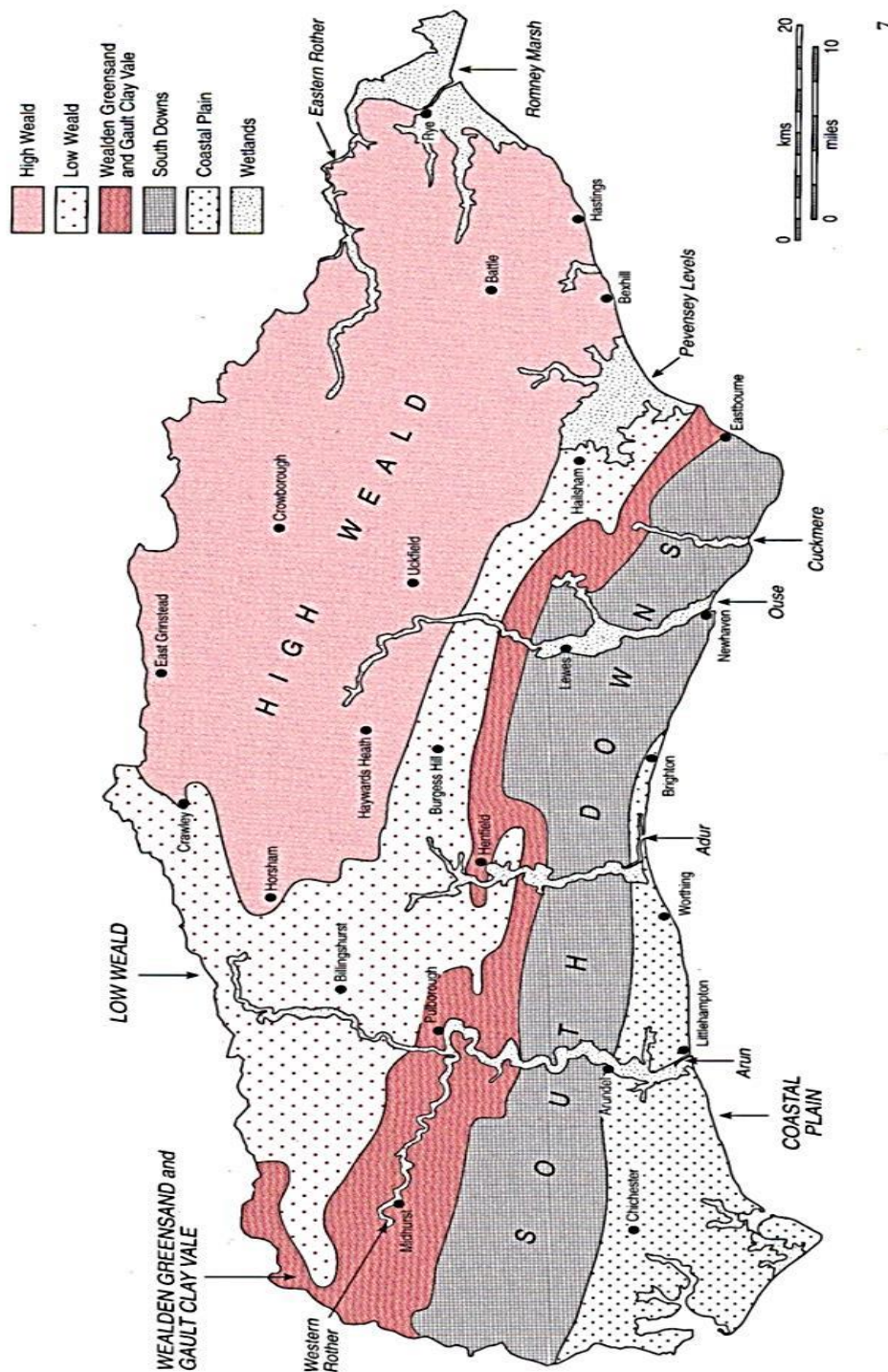


Figure 1.6: Natural Regions of Sussex showing Horsham and hence St. Leonard's Forest on the western edge of the High Weald, reproduced from Williams in Leslie, K. and Short, B. (eds) *An Historical Atlas of Sussex*, p 7.

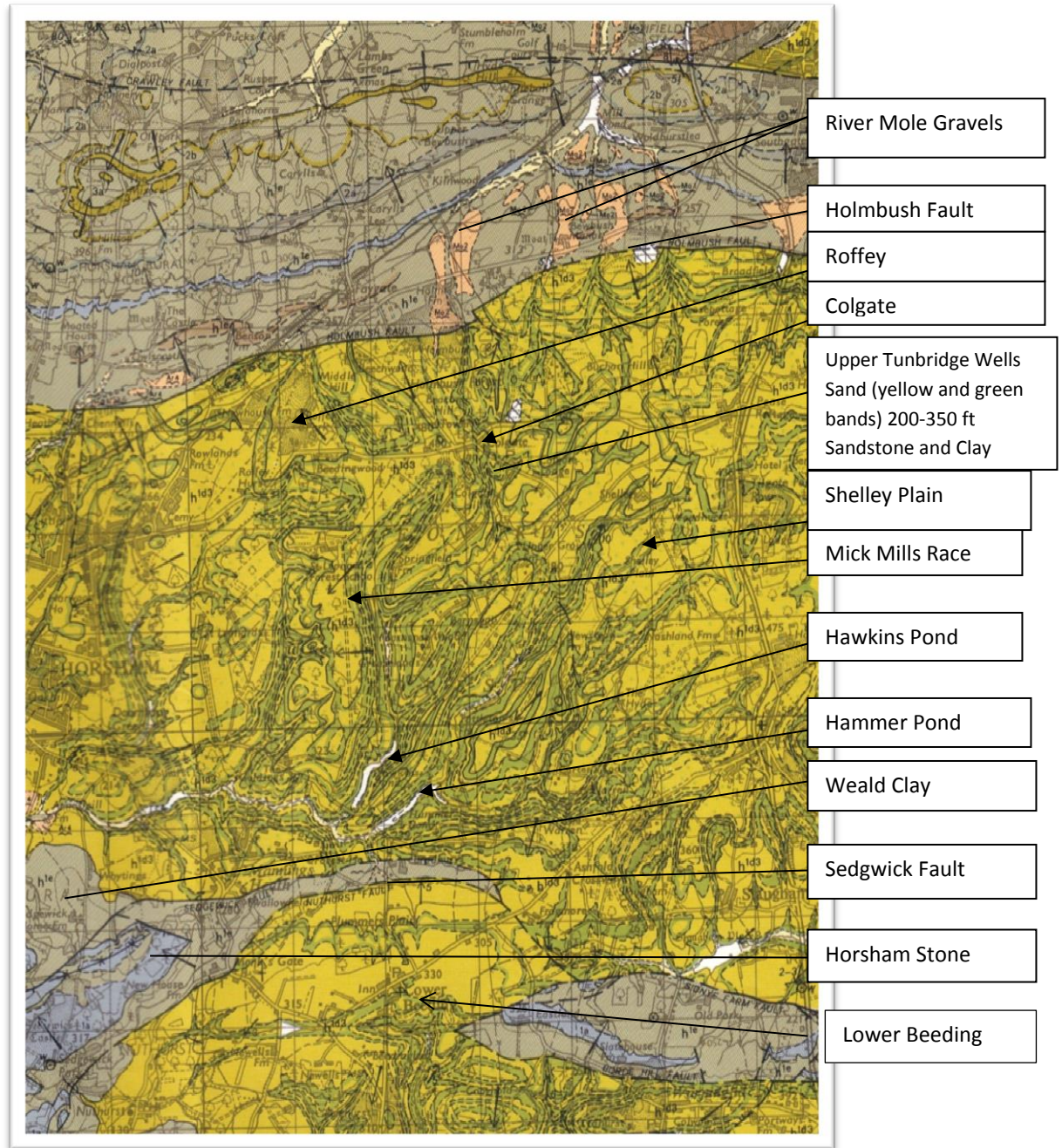


Figure 1.7: St. Leonard's Forest section of Horsham Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 302, Scale 1" to 1 ml (1cm to 0.63360 km) with geological and topographical elements indicated in addition to villages.

Wooldridge and Goldring describe the High Weald as a country of ridges rather than valleys, with roads and settlements being confined to the forest ridges due to the geology of steeply cut ghylls through the sandstone, which formed wet wooded valley floors which were difficult to navigate or settle. In St. Leonards Forest there are also areas of flat ground, plains of sandstone, for example the extensive Shelley Plain to the south east, and smaller areas such as around Stonelodge Plain, Colgate and Forest Grange. It was these areas that were more suited to agricultural purposes, the higher ridges being heathland and poorer soil.¹¹

Further features of the Forest landscape are the mine pits, mainly to the west and south of Mick Mills Race where ironstone was dug on clay outcrops.¹² Straker identified and photographed a large number of mine pits in an area which is now owned by the Forestry Commission, which showed large craters up to 9 metres across and 2.5 metres deep, where horizontal beds of ore had been followed. These were also identified by Cleere and Crossley in their study of *The Iron Industry of the Weald*.¹³ Today they are difficult to spot amid the conifer plantations although a recent 2011 Lidar survey has produced excellent results, as will be analysed in chapter 4. Remains of rabbit warrens in the form of pillow mounds and boundary banks have also emerged in this survey, adding to the important historical landscape features that had not been fully appreciated before this survey was undertaken.¹⁴

It should be noted that little archaeological work has been conducted on the Forest despite some interesting early finds. In the 19th century Hurst mentioned that

¹¹ Wooldridge, S.W. and Goldring, F. (1960) *The Weald*, London: Collins, p. 88-89.

¹² Gallois, R.W. and Worssam, B.C. (1993) *Geology of the country around Horsham; memoir for 1:50,000 geological sheet 302 (England and Wales)*. British Geological Survey, H.M.S.O. p. 60.

¹³ Straker, E. (1931, 1969) *Wealden Iron*, Newton Abbot: David and Charles Ltd., pp. 106-7, 434, and Cleere, H. and Crossley, D. (2nd edn) (1995) *The Iron Industry of the Weald*, Cardiff: Merton Priory Press, pp. 16-17.

¹⁴ Butler, C., Blandford, V., Locke, A. (2011) *A Lidar-enhanced Archaeological Survey of St. Leonard's Forest, West Sussex*, Chris Butler Archaeological Services for Forest Enterprise and Weald Forest Ridge Historic Environment Awareness Project (hereafter Lidar 2011). Unpublished, Accessible through: www.highweald.org/look-after/our-projects/weald-forest-ridge.

workmen draining fields in 1864 at Willis Farm on Plummers Plain found six fragments of bronze celts (axe heads) and likewise Honywood reported that five bronze celts, one broken, were found at Hammer Farm in the 1870s. Honywood also reported his numerous findings of flint implements and flakes, and although he wrongly thought the minepits were evidence of occupation, it is clear that early peoples were working and perhaps living in the Forest.¹⁵ Beckensall, who wrote a report of the 1961 archaeological excavation of Money Mound, just to the east of Willis Farm, suggested that the movement of people through the central Weald would have been easy along the forest ridges, and that there were numbers of flint sites in the area ranging from the Mesolithic to early Bronze Age. He noted a number of finds which included flint flakes and arrow heads, Roman coin and pottery.¹⁶ More recent local surveys have focussed on the iron industry and the identification of charcoal platforms.

1.5: Outline of Thesis Structure

The context of the current 21st century St. Leonards Forest has been described and a very different landscape exists today than in the study of the latter half of the 18th century and the 19th century. However, this thesis is interested in the earlier changes to the Forest, changes both in perception and reality, from a devalued heath and sparse woodland area, suitable only for rabbits, to one of natural scenic beauty sought after by wealthy merchants and business men escaping the great metropolis of London.

The Forest lies to the east of the market town of Horsham, and until the enclosure of 1812, only the heathland area of the Common lay between it and the town, on the periphery of the forest core and with no other heath or common within the study area.

¹⁵ Hurst, D. (1868) *Horsham: its History and Antiques*, London: William Macintosh, pp. 159-160, and. Honywood, T. (1877) Discovery of Flint implements near Horsham, in St. Leonard's Forest. *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, **XXVII**, Lewes: The Sussex Archaeological Society pp. 177-183.

¹⁶ Beckensall, S.G. (1967) The Excavation of Money Mound, *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, **105**, pp. 13-30.

Worth Forest and Copthorne common further to the east in the rape of Lewes have similarities with both Horsham's forest and common, similarities in geology and topography, but the social milieu of a market town and its communications are different. Thus the study explores the unique social, economic and environmental influences that structure the particular character of St. Leonard's Forest as opposed to others in the Wealden Forest ridge.

Chapter 2 of this thesis will focus on the methodology and sources used in the study. The theoretical approach of the work will be considered, such as where it sits in the discipline of landscape history, and then the research methods and sources used will be described, with aspects of each source outlined.

Chapter 3 considers the Forest before 1750, its shape, boundaries, early ownership and control, in order to fully understand the Forest landscape in the mid-18th century at the beginning of the period of study. Social and economic factors can be impacted by good or bad communications and so routes through the Forest are discussed along with the markets, fairs and the use of Forest resources. The Forest folklore of dragons, saints and devils is recounted and the meaning considered, before exploring the Forest mismanagement in the 16th century and the impact of this on the landscape. The context is thus set for a more detailed discussion of the impulse for change in the landscape of the Forest from 1750 to 1830 in Chapter 4. Again, in order to explore the impacts on the landscape, trade, routeways, markets, fairs, industry and commerce all in and around the Forest are noted, with particular attention paid to the flourishing market town of Horsham, which borders the Forest to the west. Landowners of the large estates in the Forest are identified and small town society considered including the population anxieties of the clergy. Landscape change due to the establishment of rabbit warrens is discussed, and the subsequent demise of these, with a move to a more valued landscape.

Chapter 5 considers the changes in landscape from 1830 to 1914 brought about by different social and economic pressures. The Forest estates are first considered which included the selling off of the Aldridge estate in the centre of the Forest. The development of wooded gardens and the interest of garden enthusiasts like the Loder family, Scrase-Dickins and Du Cane Godman are considered for their unique impact on the landscape. Chapter 6 focuses on the two villages in the Forest, Colgate and Lower Beeding, and the influence of the church and patronage of the gentry in these villages over the same period 1830 to 1914. This chapter ends with an account of the 1900 Forest Footpath Dispute, an interesting clash between public and private interests with accounts from people who used the paths. Finally, Chapter 7 is the conclusion to the thesis which pulls together what can be understood about the social and economic pressures and how they impacted on the landscape of St. Leonard's Forest, changing it from a devalued heath and woodland to a desirable area for small mansions and estates.

CHAPTER 2

Methodology and Sources

This research, and the subsequent thesis, is situated in the landscape history discipline, which has roots in local history. This inter-disciplinary area of study was established by W.G. Hoskins and popularised in the 1950s following the publication of his seminal book *The Making of the English Landscape*.¹ Landscape history is complex in that it examines varied documentation, takes the existing landscape as evidence, and draws upon the other disciplines of geography, geology, archaeology and ecology as well as economic and social history. The focus is the two way influence of human activity on the landscape and the corresponding influence of the landscape, ecology, topography and geology on human activity, together shaping communities situated in a particular landscape, in this case St. Leonard's Forest on the western edge of the Wealden forest ridge in Sussex.

In his subsequent book, *Local History in England*, Hoskins acknowledged the importance of the interested amateur who was focussed on one place, their local parish, village or small town. He imagined them often working in isolation, building up a historical and topographical knowledge of their locality through the examination of archives. More importantly, the amateur was not afraid to 'get his feet wet' by getting out into the countryside and taking notes, an audit, of the physical marks and structures on the landscape of study. Hoskins wrote this book to assist the 'great army of amateurs' involved in local history study, an area largely shunned by the professionals at that time, with the notable exception of the *Victoria County History* (VCH) which Lewis called 'the cutting edge of scholarship'. Dymond suggested there was a fracture between the amateur whose research tended to be accumulating data

¹ Hoskins, W.G. (1955, 1985) *The Making of the English Landscape*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.

and a descriptive style, and the professional concerned with critical analysis built around major concepts, with little crossover between the two.²

These aspects of the discipline were considered at a conference in the summer of 2009 on 'Local History in Britain after Hoskins' at the University of Leicester which examined Hoskins' legacy and what progress had been made by the 21st century. One of the keynote speakers, David Dymond, from the Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge, linked this tradition of local amateur historians to the Victorian antiquarian. During the author's research it has been useful to read the letters and notes recorded by the noted antiquarian Revd. John Rouse Bloxam, D.D., Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Vicar of Beeding Parish from 1862 until his death in 1891. One can appreciate how useful his work has been to several generations of local historians.

The antiquarians of the 19th century were small in number, an elite band of educated amateurs with time on their hands. They faded away in the early 20th century to be replaced by a large and growing group of middle class retired professionals, many of them women, encouraged more recently by the leisure industry, media and the internet. David Dymond noted that some professional historians looked upon this growth with horror and disdain, but Dymond celebrated the high quality of work produced by people happy to spend time and money on understanding their locality, be it through landscape, houses or ancestry. Dymond discerned two types of amateur, the consumer and the activist. The consumer enjoys historical places and events, joins the National Trust and becomes a Friend of their local museum or heritage site. The committed activist goes further, learns how to research, goes on courses, gets qualified and does their own research, publishes in local journals and joins projects and

² Hoskins, W.G. (1959, 1962) *Local History in England*, London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., pp. 1-4, and Dymond, D. (2011) Does local history have a split personality? pp. 13-28 (hereafter Dymond, 2011) and Lewis, C.P.(2011) The great awakening of English local history, 1918-1939, pp. 29-53, both chapters in *New Directions in Local History since Hoskins*, (eds Dyer, C., Hopper, A., Lord, E., and Tringham, N.) Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

societies. The author recognises herself in this last category, where the division between professional and amateur is weakened, between paid and unpaid, and where the author, as part of the community, is drawn in to participate in the exploration and understanding of their own local environment.³

Johnson in his book *Ideas of Landscape* queries the 'habit of thought' that takes without question Hoskins' way of seeing and interpreting the landscape through a pastoral and emotional paradigm. He says that it is the Wordsworthian romantic and aesthetic appreciation of landscape that underlies Hoskins' approach and indeed at the beginning of *The Making of the English Landscape* Hoskins recommends Wordsworth's *Guide through the District of the Lakes* as the best topographical guide and encourages us to imagine a past landscape.⁴ Johnson suggests that this empirical approach requires a long walk to a stunning view and an opening of the educated mind in order to understand that landscape. This is Johnson's main criticism of the Hoskins' approach, that it lacks theoretical rigour and is unscientific. In addition he makes a very good point that the approach tends to be exclusive, landscape history told from the perspective of the dominant group, rather than inclusive of difference in the community. So, although this current study is situated in the Hoskins tradition, the author suggests that it has moved into the 21st century to research, describe and analyse the St. Leonard's Forest landscape history for all the community, and with the active reciprocation of the community.⁵

³ Dymond, 2011.

⁴ Although Hoskins recommended Wordsworth's book *Guide through the District of the Lakes* he gave no reference. It was first published in 1810.

⁵ Johnson, M. (2007) *Ideas of Landscape*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 1-69.

2.1: Literature Review

As already noted there has been limited research into St. Leonard's Forest, and a limited number of secondary sources on the Forest are available, which is surprising since Legge, writing in his chapter on forestry for the VCH in 1907, assessed it one of the most important forests in the county.⁶ It is easily accessible from London and the south coast, and is situated in the densely populated south of England. It's early modern history shows that the natural resources of wood, water and iron ore were exploited to establish an iron industry in the 16th and early 17th century.⁷ In addition to Michael Drayton's topographical poem *Poly-Olbion* of 1611 in which he imagines the forest wood nymphs' distress at the felling of forest trees for industrial purposes, there is also a collection of myth and legend connected to St. Leonard's Forest.⁸ These are described in chapter 3, and it is striking that nearby Sussex forests do not have such legends recorded, and so one must wonder why. Whilst there has been little written about the Forest, VCH Volumes 2 and 6 appear to be the most valuable attempt at bringing together what information there is on the Forest from many disparate sources.

Reports of tours through England in the 18th century such as those of Celia Fiennes and Daniel Defoe give a glimpse of the Forest environs, and later writers such as the Revd. Arthur Young and William Cobbett in his *Rural Rides* give more useful detail. Local writers provide some contemporaneous accounts such as the 18th century diaries of Sarah Hurst and the histories of her descendant Dorothy Hurst. There are other diaries in the 18th century such as that by John Baker and the recollections of Henry Burstow in the 19th century which add to the picture, if not of the Forest then the town and the

⁶ Legge, W.H. (1907, 1973) Forestry, Page, W. (ed.) *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: A History of Sussex Vol. II*. London: Institute of Historical Research, University of London, p. 306 (hereafter VCH Vol. II).

⁷ Cleere, H. and Crossley, D. (1995) *The Iron Industry of the Weald*. Cardiff: Merton Priory Press, 2nd edition, pp. 16-17, 27, and Hodgkinson, J. (2008) *The Wealden Iron Industry*, Stroud: Tempus Publishing Ltd., pp. 50, 56, 110, and Zell, M. (1994, 2004) *Industry in the Countryside, Wealden Society in the Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 126-34.

⁸ Lucas, E.V. (1904) *Highways and Byways in Sussex* London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., p. 125. Lucas spells Poly Olbion as two words, but more often it is hyphenated or as one word.

social milieu. Dudley produced an idiosyncratic local history in the early 19th century and then in the early 20th century Goodliffe produced an account of Horsham and St. Leonards Forest. This was followed in the mid-20th century by two large volumes of work recounting the parliamentary history, and a millennium of facts by William Albery. All these helped to build a picture of the Forest over the 18th and 19th centuries but in small tantalising pieces and with an unfortunate emphasis on the dragon myth.⁹

The occasional papers in the *Sussex Archaeological Collections* (SAC) and Sussex Record Society publications have been very valuable for this thesis. There is one academic paper in particular, published in SAC in 1997 by Sybil Jack which relates to the ecological destruction of the Forest in the 16th century and this has been particularly helpful.¹⁰ More recently, in 2006-8, the Curator of Horsham Museum, Jeremy Knight, has produced in three volumes *Horsham's History*, the first volume of which includes a chapter on the Forest that answers a number of previously unresolved questions.¹¹ There are also short articles by local historians in the Horsham Museum journal, *Horsham Heritage* which address specific topics in connection with the Forest.¹²

For a fuller appreciation of woodland, its history and ecology reference has been made to Oliver Rackham's book *The History of the Countryside*, and his more recent book *Woodlands*. The author was also able to hear him speak at Wakehurst Place in June 2007 in connection with this book. In order to understand the landscape history of Sussex reference was made to a number of the late Peter Brandon's books, and again

⁹ Dudley, H. (1836) *The History and Antiquities of Horsham*. 1973 edition, Horsham: J. Cramp Ltd.; Goodliffe, W. (1905) *Horsham and St. Leonard's Forest with their Surroundings*. London: The Homeland Association; Albery, W. (1927) *A Parliamentary History of Horsham 1295-1885*, London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd.; Albery, W. (1947) *A Millennium of Facts in the History of Horsham and Sussex 947-1947*, Brighton: Southern Publishing.

¹⁰ Jack, S.M. (1997) Ecological destruction in the 16th century, the case of St. Leonard's Forest. *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **135** pp. 241-7.

¹¹ Knight, J. (2006) *Horsham's History, Vol 1, Prehistory to 1790 AD*. Horsham District Council, pp. 58 – 67.

¹² For example: Djabri, S (2005) Charles Beauclerk of St. Leonard's Lodge, and Hughes, A. St. Leonard's Forest, both articles in *Horsham Heritage*, Issue **12**, Spring, pp. 21-9 and 30-45.

the author had the privilege of attending a number of his lectures at the University of Sussex. Perhaps the most useful of his books for this study was his last, *The Discovery of Sussex* which took a social and cultural interpretation of landscape change in Sussex from the end of the 18th century into the 20th century.¹³

A historical geographer with particular expertise in many aspects of Sussex landscape history, not least the history of the Ashdown Forest Dispute, the work of Brian Short has also been helpful. *The Historical Atlas of Sussex*, for which he was a joint editor, gives a good overview through time, with particular chapters on relevant subjects such as population growth. Useful background material and methodological concepts were also contained in his *The English Rural Community*, and *Land and Society in Edwardian Britain* which was essential background reading for work on the Land Valuation Survey.¹⁴ John Sheail and Tom Williamson were both authors referred to for their work on historic and archaeological evidence of rabbit warrens. This gave background to the use of poor land which was useful for chapter 4. John Sheail's book *Rabbits and their history* was particularly informative and fascinating regarding the history of rabbit husbandry.¹⁵

In 2005, in a bid for funding from the Economic and Social Research Council, John (Jack) Langton and Graham Jones put together a cogent argument for more research into post medieval forests, given the conflicting and incomplete material available, lack of proper mapping, and a lack of understanding as to how forests continued to have complex and important impacts on peoples' lives. They suggested that forests and

¹³ Rackham, O. (1986) *The History of the Countryside*, London: Dent & Sons Ltd., Rackham, O. (2006) *Woodlands*, London: Harper Collins; Brandon, P. (1974) *The Sussex Landscape*. London: Hodder & Stoughton; Brandon, P. (2003) *The Kent and Sussex Weald*. Chichester: Phillimore; Brandon, P. (2010) *The Discovery of Sussex*, Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd.,

¹⁴ Short, B. (ed.) (1992) *The English Rural Community*, Cambridge University Press; Short, B. (1997) *Land and Society in Edwardian Britain*, Cambridge University Press; Leslie, K. & Short, B. (eds) (1999) *An Historical Atlas of Sussex*, Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., Short, B. (2006) *England's Landscape, The South East*, London: Harper Collins.

¹⁵ Sheail, J. (1971) *Rabbits and their history*. London: David & Charles Ltd., Williamson, T. (2007) *Rabbits, Warrens and Archaeology*, Stroud: Tempus Publishing Ltd.

chases had been prone to an academic focus on royal and aristocratic recreation and timber production, whilst the public understood forests through the myths and legends of Robin Hood and the 'Norman yoke'.¹⁶ Langton and Jones did not get their funding, but since then the project has continued at St. John's College, Oxford, to produce the first comprehensive inventory of forests and chases in England and Wales c 1000 to c 1850, and which can currently be viewed on their website.¹⁷

Correspondence with Dr Graham Jones has allowed the author to access the data collected and enable the mapping of St. Leonard's Forest's early outer boundaries and inner core (see figure 2.1).

A new project, only recently completed, has involved a partnership of 18 organisations and the Heritage Lottery Fund which have combined to form the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme which had obtained funding for a 3 year project from January 2009 to March 2012 with a focus on the unique heritage of the sandstone Forest Ridge stretching from Tonbridge in the east to Horsham in the west within the High Weald AONB.¹⁸ The project aimed to connect people and communities to their heritage, encouraging them to learn, enjoy and preserve the landscape. The Historic Environment Awareness part of the project explored the archaeological landscape using Lidar (Light Detection and Ranging) technology and this has now been completed in the four forests along the ridge, Ashdown, Broadwater, Worth and St. Leonard's, the latter being the last in 2011/12. This new and exciting project has provided opportunities for reciprocal knowledge and understanding, and has contributed to this current research on St. Leonard's Forest, and the whole will go some way to contributing to a body of knowledge that is much needed about the landscape of forests in England, and the people that lived and worked in them.¹⁹

¹⁶ Langton, J. and Jones, G. (2005). *Forests and Chases of England and Wales circa 1500-1850*, Oxford University, St. John's College Research Centre., p. xi.

¹⁷ St. John's College, Oxford website accessible through: <http://info.sjc.ox.ac.uk/forests>.

¹⁸ High Weald website accessible through: www.highweald.org/look-after/our-projects/weald-forest-ridge

¹⁹ Butler, C., Blandford, V., Locke, A. (2011) *A Lidar-enhanced Archaeological Survey of St. Leonard's Forest, West Sussex*, Chris Butler Archaeological Services for Forest Enterprise and Weald Forest Ridge

2.2: Methodology

The initial research questions have been outlined in chapter 1 and these gave direction to the research and enabled the research to be placed in its theoretical context. Once the geographic boundaries to the study had been established, the subsequent methodological approach was decided to be both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative research looked at secondary sources such as those written by local historians from both recent and historical perspectives, diarists, horticultural historians, historical geographers, newspapers and journals. Primary sources such as manuscripts, parliamentary reports and enquiries, leases and maps gave useful detail of changes in ownership and control, comment on social and landscape changes in the Forest. The analyses of these sources were undertaken through library or desk research from the recording of notes.

With regard to field research, three open and semi-structured interviews were undertaken with local people with knowledge of the Forest. One of these, Gordon Isted, was self-selected in that his son had read that the author was undertaking research on the Forest and made contact, and the other two, the author approached for information knowing their involvement in the Forest. The author was interested to hear of memories and experience which could shed further light on activities in the Forest and so asked open questions with clarifications and follow up questions. Notes were taken and some new aspects for research emerged such as the development of Coolhurst woodland garden. The author is aware that more interviews could have been conducted, particularly in the villages, but this would have tipped the research more towards social history, interesting through that would have been. In the tradition of Hoskins, field trips were also made into the Forest to identify trees, paths and boundaries and to confirm features such as the lily beds and pillow mounds, notes were made and photographs taken for later desk analysis.

To consider the impact of the development of the two villages within the Forest, a quantitative approach was taken to compare three census returns for the years 1841, 1871 and 1901. Each census was 30 years apart with similar types of data, although with the precaution of accepting possible differences in area, addresses and interpretation. Changing population and occupation were compared and set in figures and tables, while detail such as age and place of birth were highlighted and trends identified.

The methodologies, both qualitative and quantitative, encompass considerable work on the changing historical social composition of landowner, church and village, but without this analysis the social and economic impact on the Forest landscape cannot be fully understood. Given this, the methodology does include biography and social history research, however landscape history is rooted in local history, amongst a number of other disciplines, and so it was thought this approach was justified, and that the methodology suited the overall research strategy.

As noted, there was an initial difficulty to define the boundaries of the Forest and hence the study area. With reference to sources in a variety of archives, 17th century maps and the *Victoria County History*, an impression of the Forest was of a collection of walks or inner boundaries and gates, but no definitive outer boundary. Work by James in his *History of English Forestry* provided a written description of what he thought was the larger forest boundary, although he admitted that the '*exact metes and bounds of the forest are not recorded*'. Enquiries to the archivist at Arundel Castle which holds archives for the Duke of Norfolk's estates, including those that descended from the Lords of Bramber, the de Braose family, confirmed this was the case. However, the historic forest project work at St. John's College, Oxford by Langton and Jones mentioned in the literature review above, has been digitising English and Welsh Forest maps, and provided the most promising boundary with which to work.

From their research it was possible to produce a map (see figure 2.1) which shows the two Ordnance Survey map tiles of Surrey and West Sussex (170 and 182) within which area lies St. Leonard's Forest. This map shows the assumed larger extent of the Forest in the early middle ages, shown in bold black line, which is similar to James' description, and a reduced later area, the core of the Forest shown in dotted black line, which was taken for the study area in this thesis, and which is closer to the current day extent of the Forest (see figure 1.1, chapter 1).

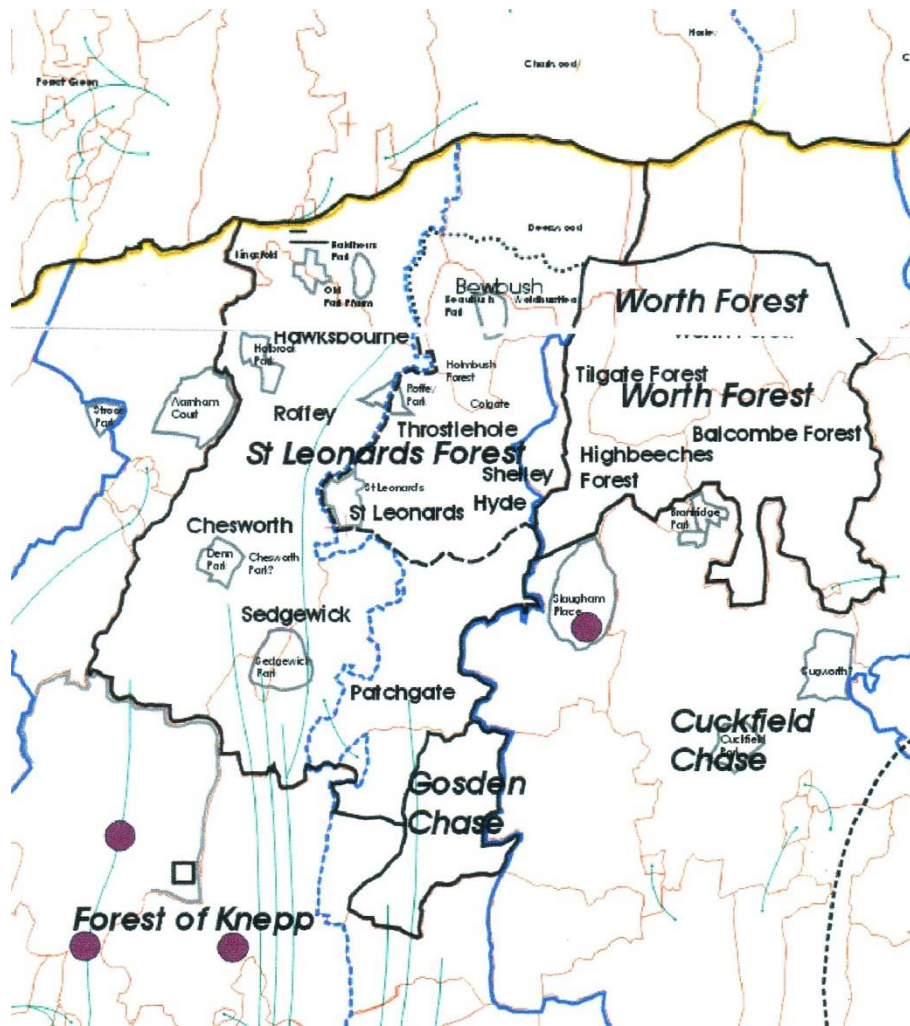


Figure 2.1: Map downloaded from two OS tiles 182 and 170 at <http://info.sjc.ox.ac.uk/forests/ForestMapTileSheet170/182.html>

Key:	Solid black line	greatest extent of forest
	Broken black line	reduced area of forest
	Blue line	extent of relevant lordships
	Grey line	parks within forest
	Yellow line	County boundary, West Sussex/Surrey
	Purple dots	Manors/vills providing forest services

2.3: Sources

The bibliography at the end of this work offers a list of all the reference sources used in the study, however, the following are the main archival sources used with the ease of handling or difficulties they presented in the production of this thesis.

1. The National Archives.

The National Archives (TNA) at Kew is the repository for the surviving documents of the 1910-15 Land Valuation Survey, which was instigated by Lloyd George, Chancellor in Asquith's Liberal Government, for the purpose of taxing capital values. The Field Books have been preserved under class IR58, while the Record Maps based on Ordnance Survey maps, are located according to regions with St. Leonard's Forest coming under South East Region IR124. According to Short, some of the original valuation books and provisional valuation forms 36/37, from which the data was taken for the Field Books, had not been conserved and so many have not survived, those that have are in local record offices. Although the relevant St. Leonard's Forest provisional forms are in the West Sussex Record Office they would not be as complete as those final copies held in TNA where coverage of the area was good.²⁰

There were certain difficulties in researching this documentation. The maps were all available, although in small sections of the forest, thus a number of maps had to be consulted to find the correct reference numbers for the land and buildings under consideration. There were also alternative maps listed for the same area and these were chosen when the run of reference numbers were similar for ease of obtaining them. The internet finding tool on the TNA website was particularly useful for identifying the area map in question in the

²⁰ Short, B. (1997) *Land and Society in Edwardian Britain*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 9-37, 90-106 (hereafter Short, 1997).

first place. It was of course likely that landowners had pieces of land that they owned over a number of maps and it would have been difficult to track these down as there was no indexing of names of owners, however, as the author was focused on the particular central Forest area as delineated in figure 2.2, land outside of this was not necessarily relevant.²¹

Field Books suffered similarly in that there was no requirement to aggregate all parcels of land owned by the particular landowner. It was clear however in a number of valuations that some were aggregated into the main holding and this appeared arbitrary. There were some omissions, such as rents paid or arranged, but generally the Field Books for this area were complete. There was some confusion with empty pages, duplicate plan numbers in books, and books begun with only a few pages completed, however this did not detract too much from the information that was able to be obtained. Drawings of the larger properties, with descriptions such as the building materials, size and condition were useful in that they gave an insight into the estates in question such as Coolhurst and New Lodge. The notes on the condition of the buildings were brief and seldom was additional information given apart from poor, fair or good.

The Land Valuation Survey was a very useful resource for this thesis as it came at the end of the study period. Comparisons could therefore be made with other documentation such as sales particulars and the decennial census. Unfortunately, early comparisons with the tithe awards could not be made as only a small portion of the north east of the Forest at Bewbush was subject to these. More could perhaps have been made of comparison with the 1911 census, as Short suggests a more thorough use of the 1911 census with the

²¹The National Archives website accessible through:
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/valuation-office-records.htm>

Land Valuation Survey would give a good picture of the area at the beginning of the First World War and perhaps comparisons with other areas in Sussex or beyond.²²

2. The British Library.

The British Library (BL) keeps a folio of S.H. Grimm's Sussex Drawings from the 18th century which includes illustrations of New Lodge and Holmbush. Although these have been reproduced elsewhere it was preferable to see the originals with regard to colour, size and notes, and obtain a copy of the New Lodge drawing (see figure 4.4).

Another useful archive in the BL was Burrell's Sussex Collection, Bramber Rape, which included late 18th century sales particulars for the 2736 acres of the Holmbush estate with good descriptions of the farms, manor house, land, lake and woodland. It was fortuitous that this estate was also referred to in Robert Peel's private correspondence 1807-1825, the Peel Papers being archived in the BL. Peel had considered buying the property previously owned by Lord Erskine and the correspondence included a valuation of three lots, with comments and advice. The detail of this valuation was particularly useful in obtaining a picture of the condition and use of the Holmbush estate at this time.

3. Magdalen College Archives, Oxford University.

Magdalen College held the archives of the antiquarian and Vicar of Beeding, the Revd. John Rouse Bloxam, the college having had an association with Beeding since the 15th century and the demise of Sele Priory. This archive consisted of correspondence, notes and cuttings in relation to the history of Beeding parish.

²² Short, 1997, p. 126.

Bloxam's notes on the concern of the local clergy as to the uncivilised and growing population in the Forest showed the increasing pressure for new churches in the north of Beeding known as Lower Beeding. Although frustratingly difficult to read at times, this archive was invaluable in understanding a pivotal development in the Forest, that of church building. This archive was also useful in understanding the formation of the new Chapelry of Colgate, the problems arising from this and the formation of the Parish of Lower Beeding, with their respective churches. The author was particularly grateful to the archivist, Dr Robin Darwall-Smith, for providing a copy of the plan of the Chapelry of Colgate which was otherwise difficult to capture (see figure 6.4). A handwritten valuation of tithes dated 1834 for Magdalen College was also useful to confirm landownership and land use.

4. Record Offices, East and West Sussex.

St. Leonard's Forest is situated in West Sussex and so most sources in the county archives were in the West Sussex Record Office (WSRO) at Chichester; however there was one manuscript in the East Sussex Record Office (ESRO) at Lewes. It was serendipitous to discover that George Gatty of Battle, Sussex, had been sent the sales particulars of an 1852 auction in four lots of the southern part of St. Leonard's Forest estate, later known as Leonardslee. This appeared to be the only surviving record of this sale and was particularly useful for the descriptions of the mansion house, park and land, in addition to a list of properties and tenants.

It was more usual to find relevant archives at WSRO. For example, the Horsham Rural District Council records of the 1900 footpath dispute were particularly fascinating in giving the official view from the defendant as opposed to the notes take by an interested party, Robert Hurst, which were in Horsham Museum archives. Also the maps of the footpaths, before and after the court

decision were attached to the records and so they were able to be reproduced (see figures 6.16 and 6.17). Other sources at WSRO in addition to legal documents to various properties were the ecclesiastical records from the Diocese of Chichester which included articles of visitation and enquiry for Upper and Lower Beeding, and notes and plans for St. John's church, Coolhurst. WSRO also kept digitised records of tithe maps such as Bewbush, and a comprehensive library including a full set of VCH and 19th century histories such as those by Cartwright and Horsfield.²³

5. Horsham Museum Archives.

The McGaw Catalogue was of considerable use. This is a catalogue of documents relating to St. Leonard's Forest, given to the Museum in 1989 by Ian McGaw, grandson of Jack McGaw, who had owned the St. Leonard's Forest estate from about 1911-13 until 1952. The documents were subsequently catalogued over the following three years by Mr and Mrs Wheeler, volunteers at the Museum with a legal background. The documents were mainly legal papers such as leases, conveyances, mortgages, deeds of covenant, and indentures. The catalogue was therefore useful in picking out certain documents such as the 1801 leases of 3000 acres in St. Leonard's Forest which could then be followed up, although occasionally the legal language was difficult to interpret without further guidance.

²³ Cartwright, E. (1830) *The Parochial Topography in the Western Division of the County of Sussex*, Vol. II, London: J.B. Nichols & Son and Horsfield, T.W. (1835) *The History, Antiquities and Topography of the County of Sussex*, Vol 2, Lewes, Sussex Press.

6. Libraries, Horsham and RHS Wisley.

Horsham library has a local history section which includes full sets of *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, Sussex Record Society volumes, *Victoria County History* plus locally published books by local historians on aspects of Horsham history, such as that by Jeremy Knight, Curator of Horsham Museum, and Sue Djabri, editor of *Horsham Heritage*. In addition were copies of 19th and 20th century published books by local residents with a local history interest such as Dudley, Hurst and Albery.²⁴ Access could also be had through Horsham library to the archive of *Country Life* journals at Worthing library which was invaluable for late 19th and early 20th century garden information.

As a member of the Royal Horticultural Society the author had access and borrowing rights for their library at Wisley, Surrey and the Lindley library in London. All the archives required in the form of articles in horticultural journals were found at Wisley or sent from London.

7. Digital sources.

A digital source that was essential for Chapter 6 was a CD ROM set of Sussex 1841-1901 Census enumerators' returns, indexed by area.²⁵ This data enabled analysis of the two Forest villages of Colgate and Lower Beeding by comparison of the decennial census 1841, 1871 and 1901. There are dangers in these comparisons in that enumeration areas change and so one is not necessarily comparing like with like. Boundaries, population and official interpretation of occupational categories, for example, all add to unforeseen variation in the data. In addition was the difficulty of defining the geographic area of each

²⁴ Dudley, H (1836) *The History and Antiquities of Horsham*. 1973 ed. Horsham, J. Cramp Ltd., Hurst, D. (1868) *Horsham: its History and Antiquities*, London: William Macintosh; Albery, W. (1947) *A Millennium of Facts in the History of Horsham and Sussex 947-1947*, Brighton: Southern Publishing.

²⁵ Copyright of S&N British Data Archive 2002-6. This data was obtained by the author with a small grant from the Sussex Archaeological Society.

village that was just coming into being so for this study the area of the village was defined somewhat arbitrarily by the author as a kilometre from the central church, but this was not always easy to determine from the address in the census.

Handwriting on the census enumerators' returns was another problem as it was not easy to read, particularly with marks over the entries such as strikes through occupation, or additions by the side as clarifications. The occupation of 'labourer' caused some difficulty. Some census notes were explicit in noting that the labourer was an 'agricultural labourer' while others just gave the general category of 'labourer', thus it was important to state any assumptions made.

The online electronic library of the University of Sussex and its links to other databases such as JSTOR, Gale and ProQuest for digitised journal articles, and 19th century British Library newspapers was useful throughout the study, but perhaps most consistently used was the Digimap Ordnance Survey Collection and the resource for historic mapping. This was essential for demonstrating the expanding villages, for checking detail of estates and farms and for showing historic detail such as the windmill pillow mound (see figure 4.10).

The Lidar-enhanced Archaeological Survey of St. Leonard's Forest, West Sussex, by Chris Butler, Vivienne Blandford and Anne Locke was published online in June 2011 and is accessible through the website www.highweald.org/look-after/our-projects/weald-forest-ridge. The survey was undertaken in 2010-11 for Forest Enterprises and the Weald Forest Ridge Historic Environment Awareness Project in order to provide recommendations for conservation and management. The survey provided annotated Lidar aerial photographs and

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) maps based on Ordnance Survey maps to indicate archaeological remains (see figure 4.8) plus photographs of the features on the ground (see figure 4.9) along with interpretation from analysis of the data and ground truthing field trips. The author found this particularly useful and timely in confirming the archival evidence of large rabbit warrens over the Forest.

The sources noted above are the primary ones used and the bibliography at the end of the thesis will attest to the variety of secondary sources referred to. An additional source not so far noted was that of personal communication, and although not great in number the respondents were very helpful with detail unavailable elsewhere. With regard to the Holmbush estate, the author was indebted to Gordon Isted, whose father was a gardener on the estate and who had memories of the estate pre-second world war. Another person with knowledge of Holmbush House was Duncan Noel-Paton who had researched a short history of Holmbush House and was happy to share information. The author was particularly grateful to Major Mark Scrase-Dickins of Coolhurst Grange whose family owned the small estate of Coolhurst in the south of the Forest. His recollections of his great uncle and the garden at Coolhurst led to further unexpected research and forgotten history.

The next chapter explores the impact of the 16th and 17th century and its legacy on the Forest landscape. It will set the context for the social and economic changes of the mid- 18th century to the early 20th century, and the impact on the landscape of St. Leonard's Forest which is the main focus of this thesis.

CHAPTER 3

The Landscape of St. Leonard's Forest before 1750

*This is the first thing
I have understood:
Time is the echo of an axe
Within a wood.*

Philip Larkin, from *The North Ship XXVI*, 1943.¹

This chapter sets the historical context for the main research period of 1750 to 1914. As such it is a brief synopsis of the main aspects of the Forest which impacted on its landscape, from its early boundaries and divisions, to who had control of the Forest and their demand for forest resources, such as timber, game, charcoal, iron and stone. The iron industry of the 16th century, which did so much to reshape the ghylls into hammer ponds, create mine pits and reduce woodland cover, is discussed and the unusual aspect of folklore associated with this particular Forest. Of necessity, this is a general account which will provide a sufficient background for the subsequent period of research from 1750 to 1914 in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

3.1: The Shape of the Forest

The shape of the Forest and its boundary were perhaps the most difficult aspects of this study to identify. Legge suggested that the six administrative and defensive Rapes of Sussex each included a forest, a port, and a castle after which they were named. St. Leonard's Forest was in the north of Bramber Rape, to the east of Horsham town and extended south to the village of Cowfold. Legge also suggested that the Sussex forests were remnants of the great Andredeswald, an area of ancient woodland from which the forests of Waterdown, Ashdown, St. Leonard's and Worth were more than likely to

¹ Thwaite, A. (ed.) (2003) Philip Larkin Collected Poems, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., p. 31.

have been contiguous or semi-contiguous woodland.² James's 1981 outline map of medieval forests and chases in southern England identifies a swathe of five forests, the most westerly of the five is St. Leonard's Forest, with Worth Forest including Tilgate to the east of it, then Ashdown Forest, all following the forest ridge (see figure 3.1).³ A more recent map of forests produced by the High Weald AONB Unit in their study area of the forest ridge gives an indication of forest pales at around 1610, and shows a large St Leonard's Forest stretching from Crawley to some way south of Horsham (see figure 3.2) which would have included in it the parks of Knepp and Sedgwick, Chesworth, Shelley and Beaubush, all disparked around this date. Tilgate Forest is shown as a much smaller area but it would have been an integral part of the original Worth Forest which James suggests stretched from the Surrey borders to Cuckfield, although like St. Leonard's Forest there are no records of the boundary.

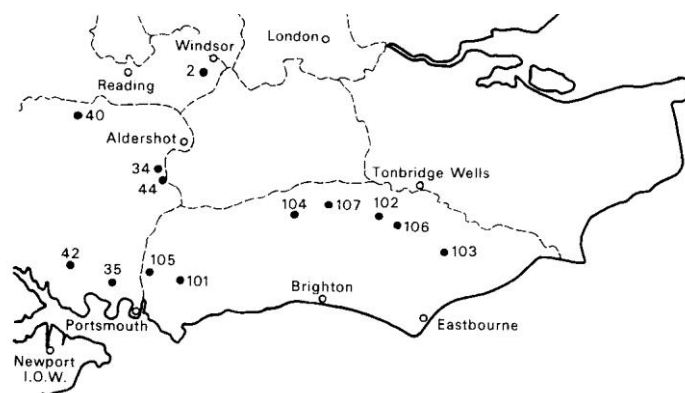


Figure 3.1: Section from 'Map 1 Some medieval forests and chases in southern England' showing the forest ridge. From James, N.D.G (1981) *A History of English Forestry*, page 79. A key identifies the following forests 104: St Leonard's Forest, 107: Worth Forest, 102: Ashdown Forest, 106: Waterdown Forest, 103: Dallington Forest.

² Legge, W.H. (ed. Page, W.) (1907,1973) *Forestry. The Victoria History of the Counties of England: A History of Sussex Vol II*. University of London. p. 293 (hereafter VCH Vol. II).

³ James, N.D.G. (1981) *A History of English Forestry*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell. pp. 79 map 1.,102.



Figure 3.2: Section from 'WFR 1610 Pales & Forests map with image' High Weald AONB Unit, downloaded from: http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/cat_view/390-publications/378-maps.html

Although the Domesday survey of 1086 was a most comprehensive document of land use, the boundaries of forests were not always clearly defined, and not all forests and woodland were mentioned. For example, there is no mention in Domesday of St. Leonard's Forest or the park of that name which William de Braiose⁴ formed in Bramber Rape.⁵ The earliest mention of St. Leonard's Forest therefore appears to be in 1207 in the accounts of the Bishopric of Winchester when timber from St. Leonard's Forest was taken to Dorking, Kingston and Southwark.⁶ Cartwright suggests that the earliest mention of the Forest was later in *Placita Coronae et de Assisis* 7 Edward 1 when Stephen de Dee and Walter de Buckley complained that William de Braose took

⁴ The spelling of Braose varies, earlier versions having an added i as in Braiose. Brandon (1998, 1999) stated that the family took their name from the town of Briouze in Calvados, Normandy.

⁵ Darby, H.C. & Campbell, E.M.J., (eds) (1962) *The Domesday Geography of South-East England*, Cambridge University Press. p. 473.

⁶ VCH Vol. II, p. 306.

from them 200 acres in St. Leonards Forest belonging to their freehold in Slaugham, William denied their claim.⁷ Dr Graham Jones suggests the Forest may be far older than these suggestions, Anglo Saxon or Roman, given the network of interests in the Forest across the rape of Bramber.⁸

Jack Langton and Graham Jones at Oxford University have been using available archive material to attempt to map British forests and thus the map of St. Leonard's Forest (see figure 2.1) is probably the most definitive to date. It is interesting that in defining the likely outer boundary, the position of the fair and chapel at the south west edge of the core Forest becomes central. Jones suggests that the fair probably predated the chapel and the arrival of the St. Leonard cult circa 1100. He wrote that 'Given the proximity of the Sussex-Surrey border, the chapel, fair and park may have lain close to an important early territorial, perhaps tribal boundary.' He compared this arrangement to Wychwood Forest in Oxfordshire where buildings and ditches pointed to substantial Roman occupation and a possible shrine, and noted other links of forests and fairs with possible religious sites.⁹

With regard to size and boundary Jack states that in the 16th century the Forest crossed 2 parishes, Beeding and Nuthurst, and was thought to be of 25-30 miles in circumference with a paling fence to keep deer in and divided into five walks.¹⁰ However, Legge states that in 1553 the forest lay in Crawley, Cowfold, Horsham and Beeding parishes, while Christopher Saxton's map of 1579 (see figure 3.3) shows a large St. Leonard's Forest seeming to impinge on four parishes, paling and pear-shaped stretching from Ifield in the north to Cowfold in the south, Nuthurst and Horsham to the west outside the Forest, and Slaugham on the east, outside the Forest. Due to the

⁷ Cartwright, E. (1830) *The Parochial Topography in the Western Division of the County of Sussex*, Vol. II, London: J.B. Nichols & Son, p. 364.

⁸ Pers. Comm. via email 24/28.1.2011.

⁹ Jones, G. (Langton, J. and Jones, G. eds) (2010) A 'Common of Hunting,' *Forests and Chases of Medieval England and Wales c 1000 to 1500*, University of Oxford, St. John's College Research Centre, p. 61.

¹⁰ Jack, S.M. (1997) Ecological destruction in the 16th century, the case of St. Leonard's Forest. *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **135** pp. 241-7 (hereafter Jack, 1997).

who had early control both of Sele Priory, in the modern day Parish of Upper Beeding, and St. Leonard's Forest through William de Braiose.¹¹ On John Norden's later map of 1595 he shows this chapel feature as a circle with a flag to the left, which in the key denotes a castle, however, circles with a flag to the right denote chapels, and since both Bramber and Arundel, known castles, are shown on the map to have a flag to the right, it appears the key is wrong and a flag to the left does in fact denote a chapel, St. Leonard's chapel.

There is documentary evidence of a chapel in the Forest, as one of the named witnesses to the confirmation of the Priory of Sele by Reginald de Braiose is a man named Robert, identified as the chaplain of St. Leonard, which indicates that there was in the early medieval period a chapel in the Forest. It is recorded that it was founded in 1208 as a free chapel, or chantry and the chaplaincy remained in the gift of the Lords of Bramber until the chapel was dissolved by the Duke of Norfolk in, or just before, 1547 following the Chantries Acts of 1545 and 1547 which allowed patrons to reclaim property and endowments.¹²

John Speed's map of 1610 based on John Norden's work clearly shows a long oval of St. Leonard's Forest, surrounded by a pale with the Chesworth Estate in the north just outside this pale, and the Chapel of St. Leonard in the middle of the Forest denoted this time by just a circle and dot. Separate parks of Bewbush and Shelley are shown reaching almost into Ifield, and in the south the extent of the Forest stretching just short of Cowfold village. To the east in Lewes Rape, the dotted line showing the division of the Rapes, and almost abutting St. Leonard's Forest are Tilgate and Worth forests. Three rivers are also shown to have a source in the Forest and flowing east, west and south, these are respectively the Ouse, Arun and Adur, demonstrating that

¹¹ Hudson, T.P. (ed.) (1987) Bramber Rape: Burbeach Hundred, Lower Beeding, Forest. *The Victoria County History: A History of Sussex* Vol VI Part 3, p. 12 (hereafter VCH Vol. VI.3).

¹² VCH Vol. VI.3, p. 26, and Thirsk, J. (1984) *The Rural Economy of England: collected essays*. London: The Hambledon Press, p.20.

the Forest was, and still is, an important watershed for the rivers of Sussex (see figure 3.4).

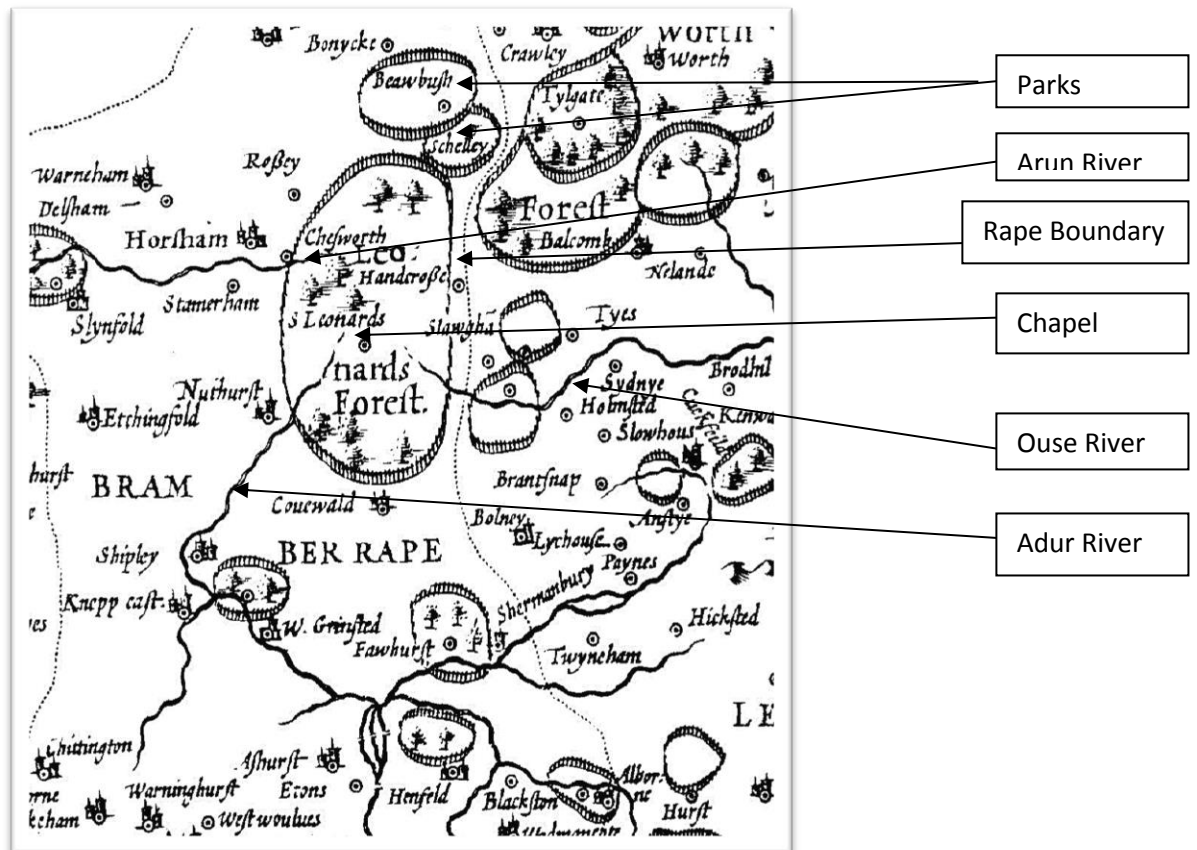


Figure 3.4: Detail showing shaded area of St. Leonard's Forest from John Speed's map of 1610, based on that of John Norden of 1595. Original scale 1" to 4 miles. (Margary, 1970, plate 4a).

According to Legge, numerous Parks bordered on, or were situated within the Forest in the 13th century, for example Knepp and Sedgwick to the south, Chesworth, Shelley and Beaubush to the north. Chesworth was the smallest at around 233 acres, Shelley contained 600 acres and was thought to be part of a wooded district called Shepherds Field Forest, and Beaubush was the largest enclosure with 757 acres. Both Shelley and Beaubush were in the possession of Sir John de Ifield at this time, and Burchall

suggests that a church and rectory was established on Shelley plain in the 13th century. However, following imparking and population loss in the 15th century they appear to have been absorbed into Crawley parish in the 16th century. Burchall records that both Cartwright and Lower wrote of Chapel Fields in the location of Shelley and a possible Chantry chapel to Our Lady of Shelley.¹³

A record made in the reign of Edward II estimated that Knepp Park amounted to 1,000 acres while St. Leonard's Forest itself was thought to cover 7,000 acres.¹⁴ By the late 15th century there were divisions within the Forest into seventeen bailiwicks which can be identified as Roffey, Bewbush, Alkynburne in the north, Hyde and Shelley in the east, Gosden and Patchgate in the south, Horningbrook in the west and Whitebarrow, Horestock, New Park, Rickfield, Sedgwick and Chesworth in the south west with Knepp further out to the south west. The centre of the Forest is thought to consist of the unidentified bailiwicks of Thrustlehole and Heron.¹⁵

James wrote that it was quite usual for any forest of a good size to be divided for administrative purposes into sections which were known as bailiwicks, walks or wards, and not uncommon in the 16th century for them to change name from bailiwicks to walks, as with the Forest of Essex. This clearly occurred in St. Leonard's Forest as the bailiwicks, some of which have the same name as the park divisions, came to be called 'walks' and Legge tells of the accounts for the year 1441 of Thomas AnKnapp, whom he suggests is probably Thomas Att Knepp, the Chief Ranger of St. Leonard's Forest, who identified four walks in the south of the Forest and six in the north, among them Throstlehill, Thornyngbroke, Beaubush, Shelley, Forterslond, Whiteberewe and Hyde.¹⁶

¹³ VCH Vol. II, p. 307 and Burchall, M. (2010) A Lost Parish, *Sussex Family Historian* Vol. 19 No 4 December 2010, pp. 190-195.

¹⁴ VCH Vol. II, p. 307

¹⁵ VCH Vol. VI.3, p. 13

¹⁶ VCH Vol. II, p. 308.

In 1720, William Pawlett of Holborn, who was the nephew of Mary Calfe and devisee of her late husband, Peter Calfe, with Lucius Henry, Lord Viscount Faulkland, raised a mortgage of £4200 on parcels of land in St. Leonard's Forest. The document names the divisions of the Forest with acreage adding up to some 5,224 acres, although not all the parcels of land are given acreage. Also, where the document cites 'wall' Legge suggests that this may well have been 'walk' and was misread in copying. The parcels of land are as follows:

Middle Wall or Rangers Lodge 1005 acres with a Lodge House and including Cyndar Croft or Coal place, 1 acre, Russels Close, 4 acres, and Runt field at 4 acres.

Carters Wall 600 acres with Lodge House occupied by Henry Shepherd.

Dawkers Lodge Walk with Lodge House, cottage and 2 pieces of land called Hassells Laines and Steeres amounting to 700 acres.

Hammer Pond House, lands called Russels with cottage formerly occupied by Elizabeth Nurton and all the benefit of a Fair kept on these premises and occupied by Edward Greenfield.

New Lodge Walk and Coolehurst, 600 acres occupied by Michael Mills (who appears to have given his name to the straight track called Mick Mills Race in the centre of the Forest, see figure 3.5).

Stone Lodge. North End Walk with the Lodge House 839 acres.

Monks Lodge Walk, 400 acres, with all houses in occupation of Thomas Naylord.

Unnamed 200 acres in occupation of Emanuel Burges.

South End Walk of 800 acres in occupation by Lynoll Calford

Forest and Crab Tree Farm of 80 acres.

And all the game, breeding of rabbits and coneys on the above premises.¹⁷

¹⁷ West Sussex Record Office (WSRO) ADD MS 32,961. Where the original historic landholding is in acres it is recorded it as such, and not converted to hectares.

Some of these names are familiar on later maps as the names of buildings, such as Stone Lodge, and Carters Lodge which give some clue as to where these walks were, however the exact locations are unknown, as are their relationship to the original bailiwicks. Place names of gates also give further clues as to where the various walks, or internal boundaries were, so that one could consider that Parkgate and Peppersgate in the south of the forest, Monks Gate further west, and Faygate and Colgate in the north could all have been internal passages. It is interesting that even today a farm on Forest Road, east of Colgate, has the name Shepherdsfield Farm thus echoing the 13th century Shepherds Field Forest which was part of the Shelley Park enclosure (see figure 3.5).

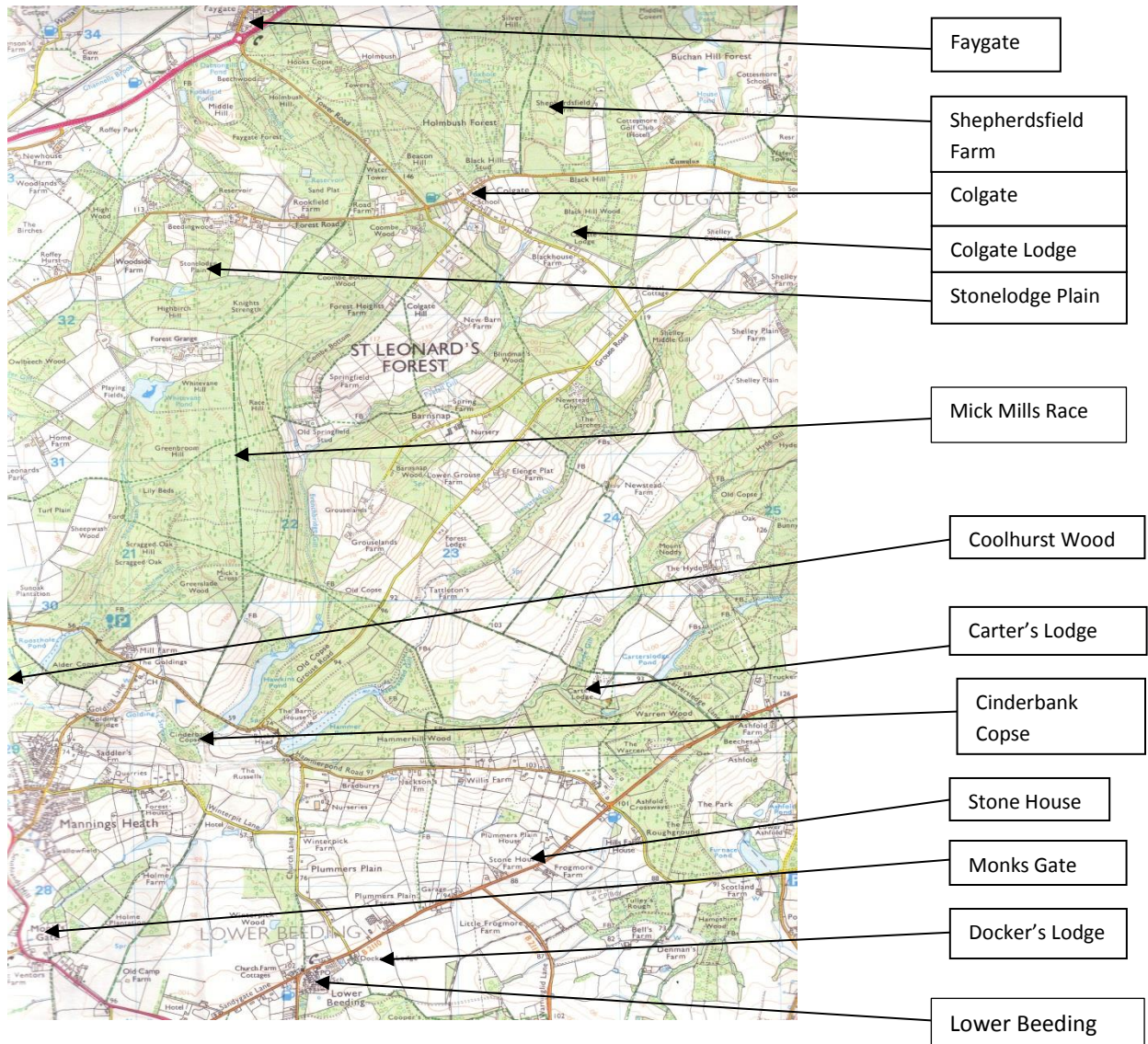


Figure 3.5: Detail from Revised 1997 Ordnance Survey Map, Explorer 134, Crawley & Horsham, original scale 1:25,000. This shows the current extent of St. Leonard's Forest with clues to the forest divisions and gates through place names.

3.2: Economic and Social Pressures

a) Early control of the Forest

Following the Norman conquest of England in 1066, the Rape of Bramber, which included the Manor of Beeding and St. Leonard's Forest, was transferred from Saxon hands to the Norman lord, William de Braose. He established himself by building a castle at a strategic crossing point of the Adur river which grew into the village of Bramber, and in 1075 he founded Sele Priory there as a daughter house to the Benedictine Monastery of St. Florent of Saumur. The priory was endowed with rights over the resources of St. Leonard's Forest, to the north of the priory and village of Bramber. The rights given were for the monks to pannage their own pigs, graze their cattle, and raise tithes from others to do the same, plus cut wood and underwood, assart, and take foals. These rights were continued by the de Braose family successors, but as the sixth William de Braose had no male descendant inheritance passed through his daughter, Aline, via her marriage to John de Mowbray, to the house of Mowbray and the Earls of Nottingham who were at the time given Royal recognition of the succession to the Bramber barony and the 'free chase of St. Leonard's Forest'.¹⁸

The priory was small, housing no more than about 16 residents and sharing the Church of St. Peter with the Parish of Beeding. Links with the monastery in France were severed in 1396 by Richard II and although independent, the priory was poor and declining, so, in 1459, John, 1st Duke of Norfolk, a descendant of the Mowbrays and their estates, gave leave for it to be made over to the Bishop of Winchester and his newly founded college at Oxford, Magdalen. Tithes from the Forest were now paid to Magdalen College, whilst they took on the responsibility of upkeep, appointment and wages of the clergy. Perhaps with an eye to the expense of this, shortly after taking

¹⁸ VCH Vol. II, pp. 306-7.

over the priory, Magdalen College rented the buildings to the Carmelite Monks of New Shoreham who had been flooded out of their own priory by the River Arun.¹⁹

Ownership of the site remained with the Dukes of Norfolk until the accession of Henry VII, first Tudor monarch in 1485. The King gave the Lordship and Rape of Bramber, including the Forest, to Thomas, Lord De la Warr, who ten years later sold it back to Thomas, Earl of Surrey and 2nd Duke of Norfolk. However, his son, Thomas the 3rd Duke of Norfolk became the subject of a Bill of Attainder, cancelling all his rights to his property, and so the Rape, Manor and the Forest was granted instead to Thomas Seymour, a political rival with whom he had been keen to form an alliance by offering him his daughter in marriage, an offer refused.²⁰

Thomas Seymour, Baron Seymour of Sudeley and Lord High Admiral, of Wolf Hall in Wiltshire, was a man whose ambitions rose with that of his family. One of his four sisters was Jane Seymour, Henry VIII's third wife, and his elder brother, Edward, became Duke of Somerset, Lord Protector and Governor of the young King Edward VI. Although a prosperous landowner and aristocrat, Thomas Seymour had further ambitions; he married Henry VIII's widow, Katherine Parr, and schemed to usurp his brother by kidnapping the young King, with his stepsisters Mary and Elizabeth. There were suggestions he also behaved inappropriately to the young princess Elizabeth, hoping to procure marriage with her after Katherine's death in childbirth. However, his plotting and schemes were uncovered, and he was attained, examined and executed for treason on 20th March, 1549. It was reported that on hearing this news Elizabeth said 'This day died a man with much wit, and very little judgement'.²¹

¹⁹ Church leaflet (1999) *The Parish and Priory Church of St. Peter (Sele Priory) in the Parish of Beeding and Bramber with Botolphs*. Published by the Parish and available at the Church of St. Peter, Upper Beeding.

²⁰ VCH Vol. II, p. 308 and G. W. Bernard, 'Seymour, Thomas, Baron Seymour of Sudeley (b. in or before 1509, d. 1549)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008, accessible through: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25181> (hereafter Bernard, 2004, 2008)

²¹ Bernard, 2004, 2008.

An adjunct to Seymour's control of the Forest was that Turner cites a memorandum attached to Sele Priory records, and endorsed by Magdalen College, that noted tithes were due from Thomas, Lord Seymour of Sudeley to the college out of the lands held by him in Bramber, Horsham, Knepp and St. Leonard's Forest but instead of receiving the tithes due, they had received letter informing them that:

'the lorde admirall aforesaide will buylde a towne within the foreste of St Leonarde, wher increase of p'vie tythes may grow to the college, or els a compositon betwene the said lorde and the college for th tythes; wheras now we have but 3s. for the herbage of the forest' (*sic*).

Turner suggested that Seymour had in fact gone far enough with his plans of building a new town to fix on a site in the Forest, and produce a plan, but only a mention of this survives, not the plan itself or the location. However, this interpretation is queried by VCH and it is suggested that Seymour changed his mind over a nucleated village in the forest and instead divided part of the forest into small farms and dwellings, although again the location of these was not identified.²²

Following Seymour's execution the Crown granted the Forest in 1553 to Sir Thomas Wrothe although by 1561 it was back with Thomas, 4th Duke of Norfolk, but as he was in debt to the Crown he offered to mortgage to the Queen the manors of Sedgwick, Chesworth, Beaubush and Shelley, with St. Leonard's Forest and the ironworks. This was taken up but eleven years later in 1572 the 4th Duke himself was attained and executed, and so the manors and Forest came fully into the possession of the Crown.²³

At this time, in the mid- 16th century, control and use of the Forest becomes much more complex as the Crown issued leases that were sublet and disputes arose. In 1573 the Crown issued 21 year leases to John Blennerhasset and William Dix, retainers in

²² Turner, E. Revd. (1858) Sele Priory, and some Notice of the Carmelite Friars at New Shoreham, and the Secular Canons at Steyning. *Sussex Archaeological Collections* X, p. 127, and VCH Vol. VI.III, p. 10.

²³ VCH Vol. II, p. 309.

the Duke of Norfolk's household, for the iron mills and forges in the Forest of St. Leonard along with the stone, ore and all necessities for producing iron. The underlease was held by Roger Gratwick who died in 1570 and left the lease to his son, Roger Gratwick who held the two forges. However, there were disputes between Gratwick the younger and Walter Covert of Slaugham Place over various payments and this appeared to escalate. Gratwick also seems to have upset Edward Caryll of Shipley who had the Gosden furnace which was south of the Forest in the Adur valley, and Covert sided with Caryll against Gratwick. These three men were all wealthy iron masters and the grievances were mainly over shared diminishing resources in the Forest. Dispute followed dispute, one argument was over fishing in the hammer ponds, the next was about rent being paid to the Crown. Gratwick complained that Covert, Caryll and others conspired to deprive him of his title and term in the ironworks and take by force all his wealth and substance. Fighting did break out amongst their retainers, and Straker describes how twenty or more of Caryll's men, the most dissolute, disordered, quarrelsome and riotous persons, set upon Gratwick's men in a warlike manner with swords, daggers, staves and other weapons wounding and beating them.²⁴

In another incident, a leading Caryll man went to the minepits, struck a Gratwick man with a mattock, threw him in the pit and threatened to follow up with stone, not caring if he killed him or not. These disputes carried into Horsham town with daggers being drawn and victims chased. It seems that Gratwick did in fact lose out, and in 1601 Sir John Caryll of Warnham, nephew of Edward, was granted a 60 year lease on the greater part of the manors of Sedgwick, Chesworth and the Forest, however part of Sedgwick and Chesworth were further sublet to Sir William Ford who then sublet it in 1642 to a John Gratwick, presumably the same family as Roger Gratwick. Chesworth by this time had been disparked and divided into a ten small farms while Sedgwick also

²⁴ Straker, E. (1931, 1969) *Wealden Iron*. Newton Abbot: David and Charles Ltd. pp. 433-440. (hereafter Straker, 1969).

had been disparted and split into eleven farms plus the 372 acres that was Sedgwick Lodge and grounds.²⁵

In July 1631 there was a brief survey of the Manor and Forest of St. Leonard's which confirmed that Sir John Caryll had 30 years of his lease yet to run on the Forest, iron mills and forges, with the right to dig stone and ore, take 250 loads of charcoal and 30 cords of wood a year, plus rights over the ponds. There were seven copyholds in fee noted over 173 acres, all paying rent, with the three largest areas held by Richard Wood with 50 acres, Sir Walter Covert with 45 and William Barstow with 40 holdings.²⁶

However, it appears that in the same year the Crown granted the reversion of the Forest in trust to Sir William Russell, Bt., who 3 years later conveyed his interest to Sir Richard Weston, and his sons John and George. Sir Richard Weston was an advocate of agricultural improvement bringing back to England techniques he had seen on the Continent, the family were still in control of the Forest in 1659. In the north and east of the Forest the Middleton family were in possession of Shelley and Bewbush, having had a lease granted from Sir Thomas Sherley of Wiston. During the Commonwealth, Thomas Middleton was MP for Horsham but was suspected of being involved in the Royalist uprising at Horsham in 1648 and so his estates were sequestered, and along with all other iron workings belonging to the crown and royalists, the St. Leonard's Forest iron forges were destroyed by Parliamentary forces under Sir William Waller.²⁷ With the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Middleton's estates were granted to Edward Montagu, 1st Earl of Sandwich, while Charles II conferred the Forest of St. Leonard itself on his physician, Sir Edward Greaves, who died in 1680. Following his death the Forest descended via his daughter, Mary Calfe,²⁸ to her nephew, Captain

²⁵ VCH Vol. II, p. 309, and Straker, 1969, pp. 433-440.

²⁶ Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone, CKS/U269/E276/1 transcribed by Janet Pennington.

²⁷ Straker, 1969, p. 459, and Lower, M.A. (1849) *Historical and Archaeological Notices of the Iron Works of the County of Sussex. Sussex Archaeological Collections*, II, pp. 169-220 (hereafter Lower, 1849).

²⁸ The name Calf is variously spelt with and without a final 'e'. As it mostly appears with an 'e' the author has used this spelling throughout.

William Powlett and hence to his cousin John Aldridge of St. Martins in the Field, London, and then to his brother, Abel Aldridge in 1746.²⁹

b) Routeways

Routeways were, and still are, important routes of communication for trade and commerce and thus they impacted on the development of the market town of Horsham on the Forest's western edge, which in turn contributed to the traffic through the Forest and the value placed on the Forest land and resources. Chatwin and Gardiner suggested that patterns of communication such as routeways were also indicative of the differing patterns of woodland development and exploitation. It is therefore useful to consider what roads and footpaths crossed and came near to the Forest as part of the development of the Forest and its hinterland. It is clear that the underlying geology and topography of the Forest ridge was useful in finding passable routes through the Forest. However drove roads from the south were stopping short of the Forest indicating a lack of manor and outlier, although as cattle were becoming an important aspect of the Horsham markets, they arrived by hoof to the north west of Horsham from Wales, and for a period were an economically important trade for the area.³⁰

The existence of gates indicates passages, footpaths and tracks through the Forest linking or passing through the bailiwicks or walks. These would have developed for both economic and social purposes. Perhaps the oldest route through the Forest was identified by Margary as Track VI: Ashdown Forest –Turners Hill – Pease Pottage – Horsham Ridgeway. Margary identified it as a Roman track and probably a pre-Roman hard greenway track along the Forest Ridgeway which had been used for centuries and

²⁹ VCH Vol. **VI.3**, p. 17, and Comber, J. (1931) *Sussex Genealogies*, Horsham Centre, Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd., pp. 8-12.

³⁰ Chatwin, D. and Gardiner, M. (2005) Rethinking the early medieval settlement of woodlands: evidence from the western Sussex Weald. *Landscape History, Journal of the Society for Landscape Studies*. Vol **27**, pp. 31-49. (hereafter Chatwin and Gardiner, 2005).

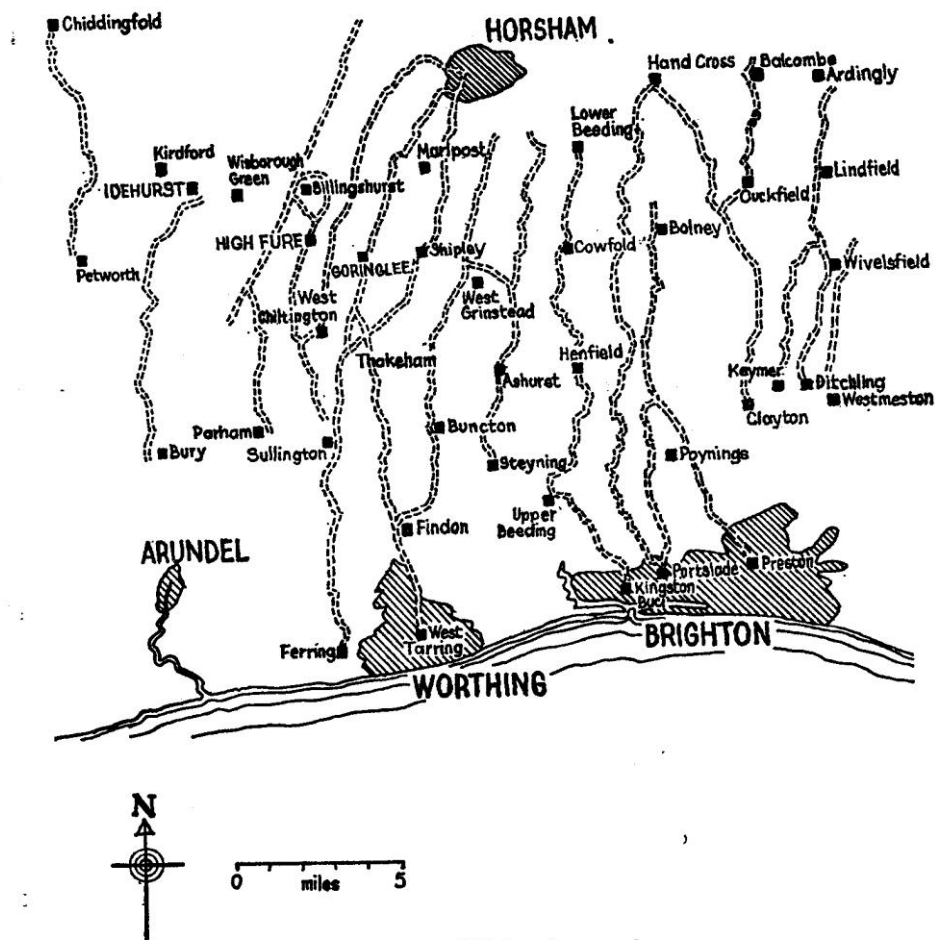


Fig. 5. Old droving roads.

Figure 3.6: Reproduction of 'Map of Old Droving Roads' in Peter Brandon's *The Sussex Landscape* (1974) p 73.

improved by the Romans. It branched at Turners Hill to run past Worth Priory and through St. Leonard's Forest, east to west from Pease Pottage to Colgate and Horsham, possibly on to Dene Park. Margary suggested that these types of tracks were thoroughfares, linked to a network of tracks, and used to gain access to the Forest iron ore.³¹ Brandon wrote of drove roads coming up from Washington to the Crockhurst swine pastures south of Horsham and his map of old droving roads (see figure 3.6) shows the linking of Upper Beeding through Henfield and Cowfold to its outlier at

³¹ Margary, I.D. (1965) *Roman Ways in the Weald*. London: Phoenix House, p. 258 (hereafter Margary, 1965).

Lower Beeding. It is thought these routes were used for pannage, the fattening of pigs on acorn and beech mast in the forest and wood pasture, and for driving livestock to markets.³²

However, Chatwin and Gardiner suggest that there is not a one size fits all theory of woodland development and it is not necessarily the case that woodland was developed as part of the outlier of a parent manor, and thus subject to grazing by cattle and pigs from a distant manor. They suggest that the pattern of drove roads from the coast to Horsham was influenced by the fact that St. Leonard's Forest was high open heathland with poor soil and thus undesirable as an outlier. Hence the drove roads stop in the more fertile region at the southern outer boundary of the Forest. Chatwin and Gardiner's map of areas of settlement and woodland development in the western Sussex Weald (see figure 3.7) shows a strip area running north easterly up to Horsham characterised by a linear layout of fields and lanes which coincide with the historic tenurial structure. The fold areas are less planned than the strip, formed by an older settled landscape of random roads and fields, wooded areas and commons. Whereas the area to the south of St. Leonard's Forest is characterised by the north-south drove roads leading to the edge of the Forest and where fields are generally aligned north-south, but in a less orderly fashion.³³

The routes through the Forest, and up from the coast would have been used for trade. Horsham town was growing in importance as a market town in the medieval period, and there is archive evidence, again from the accounts of Thomas Att Knepp that as a Ranger he received tolls and dues from a fair, held on the feast day of the saint in St. Leonard's Forest itself. The fair was originally held on St. Leonard's Day, 6th November, the dates recorded were 1438 and 1441, and it was thought that this was mainly for the sale of horses.

³² Brandon, P. (1974) *The Sussex Landscape*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, pp. 72-75.

³³ Chatwin and Gardiner, 2005.

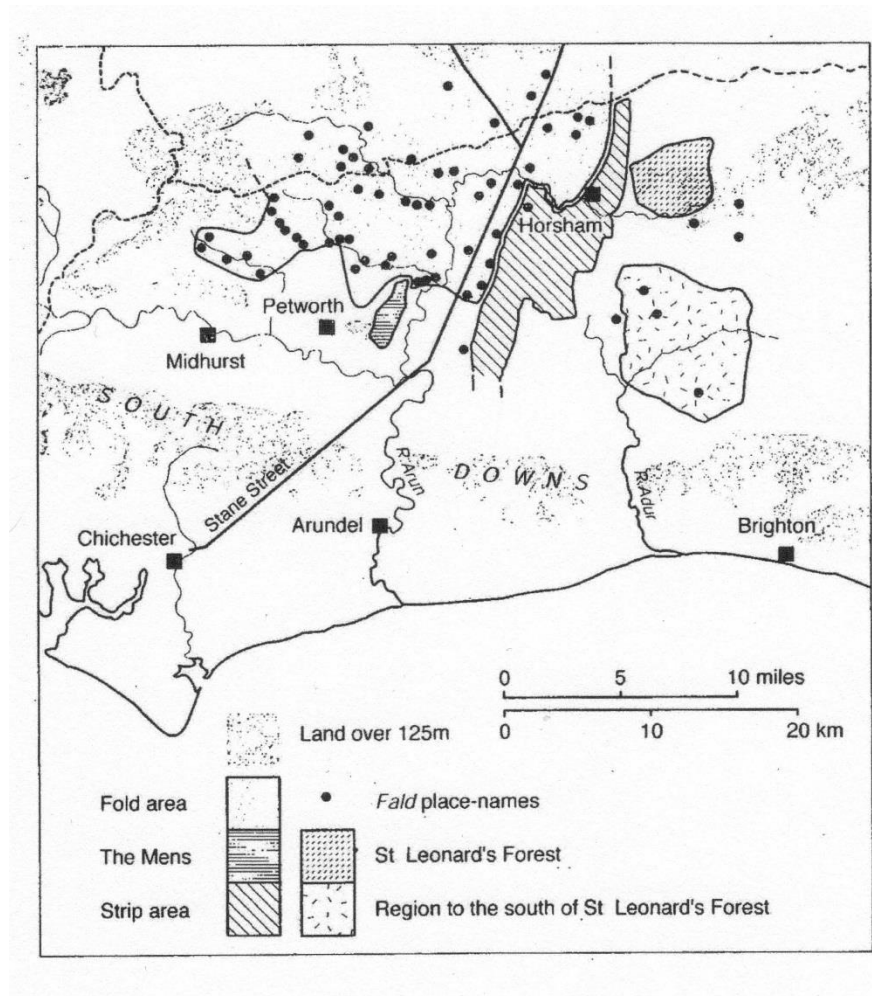


Figure 3.7: Map reproduced from Chatwin & Gardiner article 'Rethinking the early medieval settlement of woodlands' Fig 9 Areas of settlement in the western Sussex Weald, page 45.

It seems that the date and site of the fair changed over time with cattle supplanting horses in importance. Richard Budgen's map produced in 1724 clearly shows the site of the fair at that time in the early 18th century at the edge of the Forest to the south west (see figure 3.8) and this accords with the Pawlett mortgage document of 1720 referred to earlier, which places the fair on land called Russels near Hammer Pond House, in all probability next to the Hammer Pond in the south of the Forest. The village further south of the Forest called Cowfold perhaps gave credence to the movement and importance of cattle to be marketed in this area. Knight suggests that

the size of the church in Cowfold underlined the economic importance of cattle and noted that they came from as far away as Wales to the yearly fair.³⁴

Brandon's map at figure 3.6 shows no drove roads travelling in a transverse, west/east directions which clearly there would have been to drive cattle from Wales. However, Roland Harris' map produced for the High Weald AONB organisation in his research document *'The Making of the High Weald'* does show a limited number of old track ways traversing the Weald (see figure 3.9).

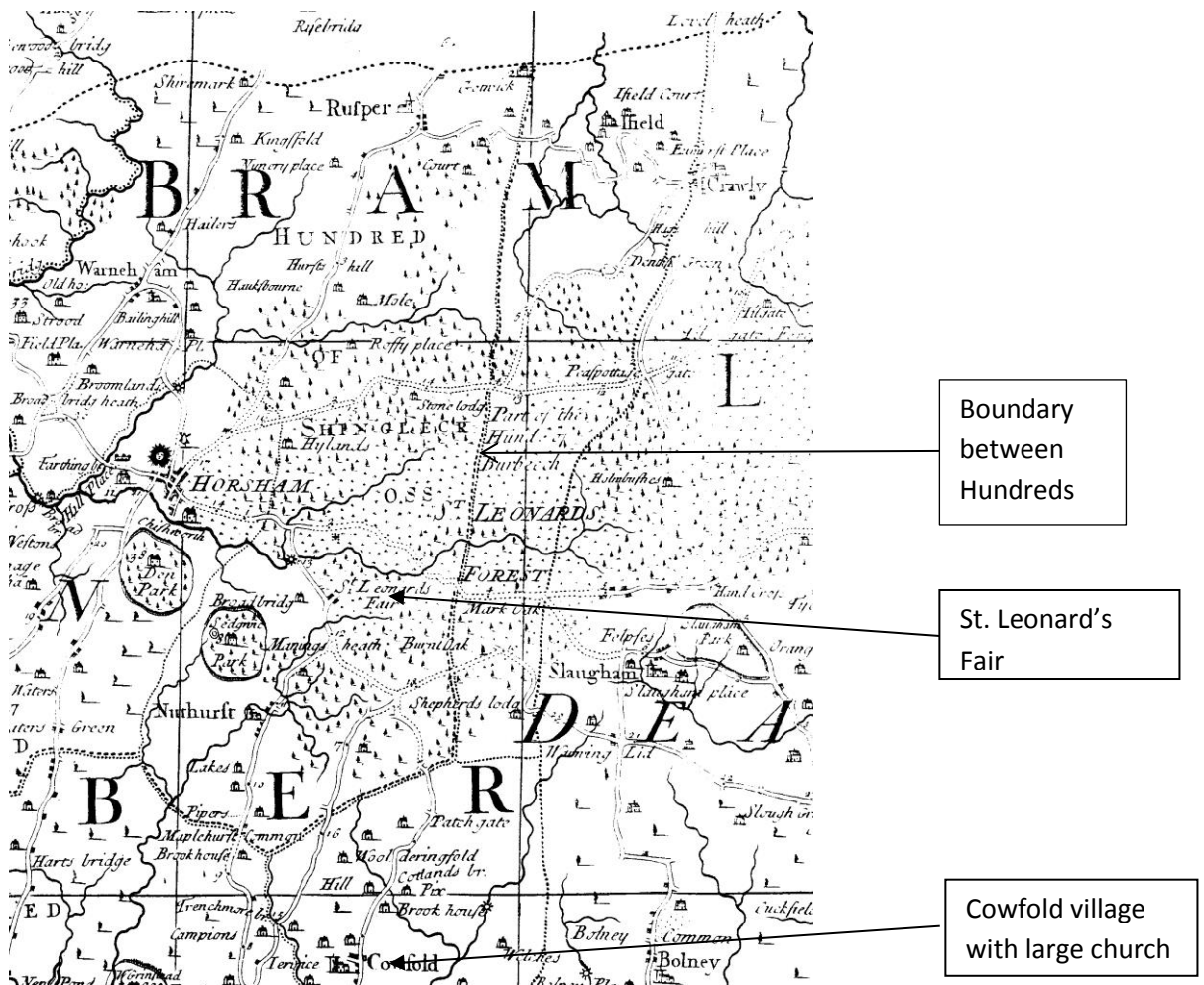


Figure 3.8: Detail showing position of St. Leonard's Fair on the southern edge of St. Leonard's Forest, from Richard Budgen's map of 1724. Original scale: 1" to 1 mile. (Margary, 1970, plate 6).

³⁴ Knight, J. (2006) *Horsham's History Vol I Prehistory to 1790 AD*. Horsham District Council, p. 62.

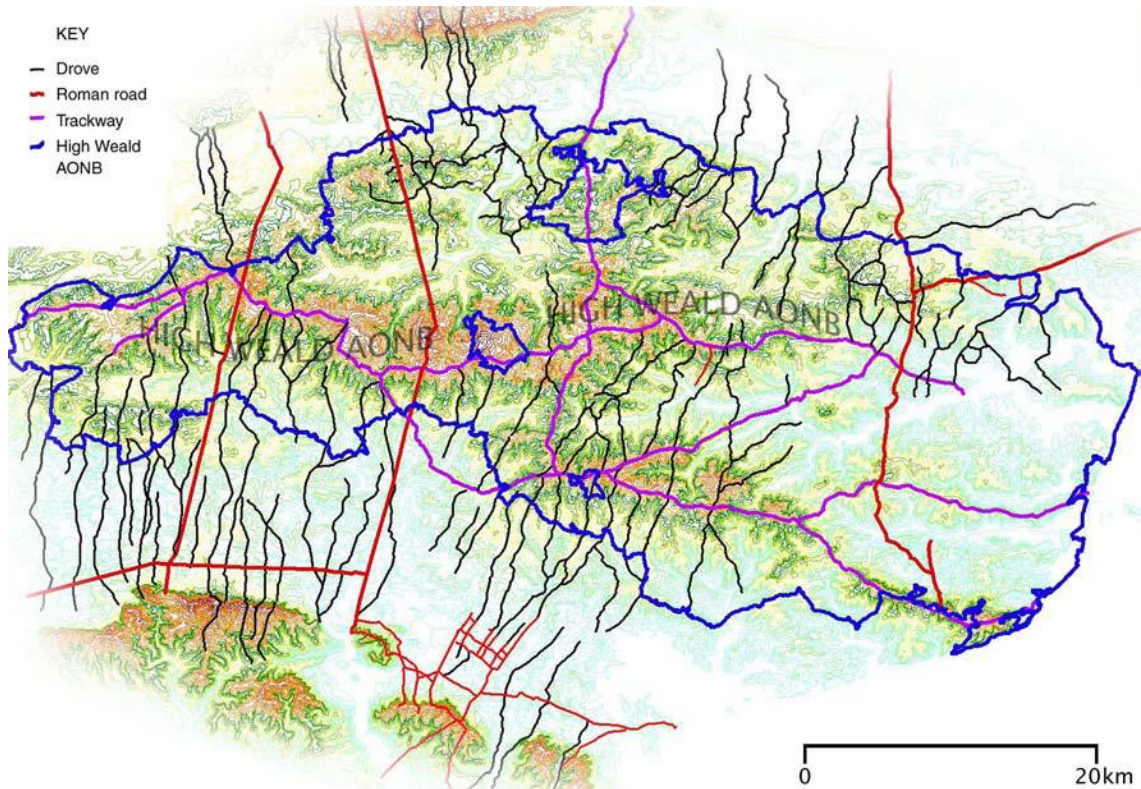


Figure 3.9: Map of early routes in the High Weald Fig 7., p. 22, reproduced from Harris, R.B., Nov 2003 version 2.2 '*The Making of the High Weald*'. Downloaded from <http://www.highweald.org/component/content/article/420-research-reports/88-making-of-the-high-weald.html>

Hindle identified distinctive drove roads across Britain, which show on aerial photography as sinuous wide roads and multiple track ways. He based his speculative maps on Roman roads, contemporary maps and market towns. However, Chatwin and Gardiner are not convinced by the supposed alignment of Roman and drove roads with prehistoric tracks. They note a more significant relationship between Roman roads and drove roads but suggest the exact relationship remains uncertain.³⁵ Witney, in his

³⁵ Hindle, P. (2002) *Medieval Roads and Tracks*, Princes Risborough: Shire Publications, pp. 14-16, 35, and Chatwin and Gardiner, 2005, p. 38.

study of the Kent Jutish Forest suggested that prehistoric tracks could be surmised from parish or hundred boundaries due to the fact that settlement in the Weald came later than the forest droves. However, he noted that most were radial, few were transverse as there was little use for these and they tended to become over-run, apart from those on ridges which would have been well used.³⁶

Richard Moore-Colyer has noted how extraordinarily difficult it was to identify the movements of Welsh drovers through England but that there were local clues in the wide grass verges, local tales concerning drovers and the numerous 'Welsh' place and field names identifying the original purpose of the lane.³⁷ Witney has no mention of Welsh cattle going so far as the Kentish Weald, whether across Sussex or not, at this early date.³⁸ However, Skeel has later evidence of Welsh cattle being sold in Maidstone market in 1686.³⁹ Rather more sobering evidence, that confirms the Welsh drovers were indeed in Horsham, is from a burial notice November 18th 1609 of Roger Lewis, 'a Welchman, a drover of cattle', the reason of death is not given but a sad event so far from home.⁴⁰

One could suppose a continuous traditional trade, as William Cobbett travelling between Cricklade and Cirencester on his rural rides between 1821 and 1832 reported seeing 'in separate droves, about two thousand Welsh Cattle, on their way from

³⁶ Witney, K.P. (1976) *The Jutish Forest, A Study of the Weald of Kent from 450 to 1380 AD*. London: The Athlone Press, pp. 29,30. (hereafter Witney, 1976).

³⁷ Moore-Colyer, R (1974) Welsh Cattle Drovers in the Nineteenth Century – 2. *National Library of Wales Journal*, Summer 1974, Vol. **XVIII/3**. No page numbers. Extracted onto pages of GENUKI by Gareth Hicks April 2003. Accessible through: www.genuki.org.uk. (hereafter Moore-Colyer, 1972).

³⁸ Witney, 1976 pp. 29,30.

³⁹ Skeel, C. (1926) The Cattle Trade between Wales and England from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*. Fourth Series, Vol. **9**, pp. 135-158. (hereafter Skeel, 1926).

⁴⁰ Garraway Rice, R. (ed.) (1915) The Parish Register of Horsham in the County of Sussex, 1541-1635, and 1635-1753 Burials, *Sussex Record Society*, Vol. **XXI** (hereafter Garraway Rice, 1915) – there are two more entries for Welshmen, a John Williams and Hugh Bowen in April and November, 1586, although neither are identified as drovers.

Pembrokeshire to the fairs in Sussex. The greater parts of them were heifers in calf'.⁴¹ Skeel quotes a fascinating oral history from a Mr Edward Browne of Albury Heath, south east of Guildford, whose father and grandfather remembered the droves in which 500 or 600 small black Welsh cattle came over from the direction of the Hogs Back, the A31, and travelled eastward till all were sold. It was suggested that from Albury Heath the drove would go east to Dorking or south to Horsham.

In considering the route that could have been taken, a place name clue can be seen on OS 145 Explorer map 2007 at TQ 095437 a Radnor Road, Radnorshire now being part of Powys, bordering England. At Ewhurst there is the remains of a Roman road, a branch road off Stane Street which links to the north of Horsham. Margary says there were several ancient trackways around this branch road, one going northward from Farley Heath to Albury and Newlands Corner.⁴² Moore-Colyer was able to identify from 19th century drovers' account books the drove routes taken by a David Johnathon of Dihewyd who sold cattle at the fairs of Romford, Brentwood, East Grinstead, Horsham and Kingston, coming down from Reading through Blackwater to Albury, Ewhurst and Horsham.⁴³ This was clearly a well-used route and one can speculate why the venue for the November St. Leonard's cattle and horse fair in the south of the Forest became a less popular place for a cattle market as the cattle would have been driven past, or through, Horsham town. The cattle market was first moved to the Common on the north side of the town and then to the Bishopric, on the Guildford Road to the western edge of the town, nearer the drove roads.

The drovers would have been Welsh speakers and from Skeel's oral history source comes a wonderful quote which brings alive the drama and noise of the drove which must have been well known for years to the people of Horsham in the run up to the fairs and cattle markets:

⁴¹ Cobbett, W. (1893) *Rural Rides during the years 1821 to 1832: with economical and political observations*. A new edition with notes. London: Reeves & Turner. Accessible through: www.archive.org.

⁴² Margary, 1965, p.86.

⁴³ Moore-Colyer, 1972.

“The noise consisted of the shouting of the drovers combined, I suppose, with a certain amount of noise from the cattle. But it was the men's voices that chiefly attracted attention. It was something entirely out of the common, neither shouting, calling, crying, singing, halloing or anything else, but a noise in itself, apparently made to carry, and capable of arresting the country-side.”⁴⁴

c) **Game management, wood and charcoal**

Management of forests and woodland for resources of food, wood for fuel, repair and other uses, gave the forest a particular shape to the landscape as areas were divided, fenced and gated. The purpose of the divisions of the Forest into parks or walks was mainly for the preservation of deer and game. Fallow deer were introduced into England by the Normans as a smaller, easier to manage species, than the native Red deer as Fallow deer could be contained by a cleft oak fence, or pale.⁴⁵ Legge suggested that due to the proximity of Chesworth, Sedgwick and Knepp, Edward I and Edward II would undoubtedly have hunted over the Forest with staghounds. He also noted a claim of free warren brought to the Horsham Assizes in 1278 by the Lord of Bramber, William de Braose, which disclosed that on Shrove Tuesday any Knights, or free tenants of the barony, could hunt and carry off a wild beast, and furthermore Sir Roger de Covert claimed this privilege and also to ‘cut bludgeons in the woods to throw at the hares’, a rather strange local sport, but it does indicate a variety of game available in the Forest.⁴⁶

Rabbits had been introduced into England in the late 11th century and took a while to establish in this climate, adult rabbits being called coneys, and the young referred to as rabbits until the 18th century. The fact that the Lord of Bramber claimed ‘free warren’ over the Forest meant that the Crown had granted him the right to any animal that

⁴⁴ Skeel, 1926, pp. 135-158.

⁴⁵ Rackham, O. (2006) *Woodlands*. London: Harper Collins, p. 138 (hereafter Rackham, 2006).

⁴⁶ VCH Vol. II, p. 307.

could be taken by a large hawk, which would be mainly the Hare, Rabbit, Pheasant and Partridge, and he could prosecute anyone hunting and taking these animals, which was what he did in the Horsham Assizes in 1278, as noted above. Edward III granted to Sir John de Ifield rights over Schullegh (Shelley) Beaubusson (Beaubush) and Knepp to pasture his horses, cattle and sheep, and pannage his swine in these parks.⁴⁷ Rights of pannage were also granted by John de Braose, and confirmed in 1235, 'to the Church of St. Peter of Sele and the brethren living under rule there, belonging to the monastery of St. Forent of Salmur (*sic*)..... tithes of pannage and herbage of the forest of St. Leonard and of Crochurst as they have peacefully received them hitherto'. Later, in 1247, a dispute between Hugh, Chaplain of the Chapel of St. Leonard in the Forest, and the monks over Rights, demonstrates that the Forest was producing calves, foals and cheese which are all called the 'tithes of herbage.'⁴⁸

The division of a forest into parks or walks enabled not only better management of the areas for venison and game, but for wood and charcoal as well. Sections of forest could be used for coppicing and the animals excluded while the undergrowth and young tree shoots recovered, Rackham calls this a 'compartmented' park.⁴⁹ Charcoal making involves the slow burning of coppiced wood, which was essential for the smelting of iron at this period. It is perhaps an indication of charcoal making in the north of the Forest that the village of Colgate on Forest Road, between Horsham and Pease Pottage, had connections in 1279 with a family called Godelene de la Collegate which Glover noted as meaning 'dweller at the (char)coal gate' and thus suggesting that an early iron-smelting works were nearby.⁵⁰ From the early medieval period, iron and charcoal were being produced in St. Leonard's Forest, but on a small sustainable scale through the use of basic iron furnaces known as Bloomeries.

⁴⁷ VCH Vol. II, p. 307.

⁴⁸ Salzman, L.F. (ed.) (1923) *The Chartulary of Sele Priory*. Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, pp. 32-33.

⁴⁹ Rackham, O. (1986) *The History of the Countryside*, London: J.M. Dent and Sons, pp. 125-6.

⁵⁰ Glover, J. (1997) *Sussex Place-Names, their Origins and Meanings*, Newbury: Countryside Books, p. 55, also referenced in Mawer, A. and Stenton F.M. with Glover, J.E.B. (1969) *The Place-Names of Sussex, Part I The Rapes of Chichester, Arundel and Bramber*, Cambridge University Press, p. 203.

The Chapel of St. Leonard was still operating in 1535 and there is archival evidence that the incumbent, Alan Coke, received money for rents, oblations and profits from wood sales and other casual revenues. Shortly after this date there is more evidence of the productivity of the Forest following the attainder in 1549 of Thomas Seymour, Lord High Admiral, when an inventory of his possessions was undertaken at Chesworth. In Knepp Park there were 100 oxen, 53 sheep and one cow, plus 13 young gelding horses. In Sedgwick there were 10 pigs and 100 deer, while at the 'Litill Park in the Forest', possibly the area of the later St. Leonard's Estate, there were 80 deer. In addition to this were the payments to underkeepers of animals, at Beaubush and Shelley Parks, John Berde received money plus 9 cattle and 20 horses, while John Myles at the Litill Park received 60s a year and 'serteyn catall'. Mention is also made of a water bailiff with oversight of ponds and fisheries so fish as well as meat were being produced.⁵¹

Short notes that medieval forest administration declined during the later Tudor period due in part to a lack of enthusiasm of the royals for hunting, particularly as Elizabeth grew older and subsequently died in 1603. The result was the encroachment of pasturing, and although Charles I attempted to reverse this trend and enforce forest laws, this was unpopular and the policy died with him. The new Commonwealth (1649-1660) was more interested in disafforestation and land improvement, with the consequent increase in the value of the land and profits for the land owners, rather than the preservation of woodland for game. This new drive continued with the restoration of the Monarchy, so that generally a focus of forest production became timber, glass and iron if agricultural improvement was not successful.⁵²

⁵¹ Ellis, H. (1861) Inventories of Goods etc., in the Manor of Chesworth, Sedgwick, and other Parks, the Manor Place of Sheffield, and in the Forest of Worth, with the Iron-works belonging to the Lord Admiral Seymour, at the time of his attainder, taken 1549. *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **XIII**, pp. 118-131, (hereafter Ellis, 1861).

⁵² Short, B. (ed. Thirsk, J.) (2000) Forests and Wood-Pasture in Lowland England. *The English Rural Landscape*, Oxford University Press, pp. 122-149.

d) Iron production

The production of iron and timber became an important economic activity in St. Leonard's Forest in the 16th century and impacted the landscape of this Forest profoundly. There is no evidence to suggest that St. Leonard's Forest was connected with glass production, unlike the wooded areas around Kirdford to the north west of Horsham, however, the production of iron in the Forest through the use of blast furnaces spread rapidly in the 16th century, and Jack notes that by the 1570s there were a dozen forges and furnaces within a 10 mile radius of the Forest as well as within it.⁵³

There is archival evidence from the 13th and 14th century for bloomery furnaces at Roffey, in the north of the Forest, and archaeological excavation confirms that here was a large, established site making arrows, both heads and shafts, and horseshoes.⁵⁴ Cleere and Crossley wrote that in the western Weald iron ore was dug out of mine pits by digging a shaft of about 1.8-2.4 metres diameter down from the surface ground into the iron bearing rock, up to a depth of 12 metres, and then widening out along the seam of ore. This must have been a dangerous business with the likelihood of dug out shafts collapsing, but a series of pits were dug, with the new pit filled with the spoil from the previous one. Horsham Parish burials for July 10th 1613 note a William Atkins, mine digger, killed in a mine pit which gives credence to the danger of this work.⁵⁵ The local name for iron ore was 'mine' and so these workings are known as Minepits and one can see from figure 3.10 how many were identified by 1972 based in and around the St. Leonard's Forest area, particularly to the north of the Forest near Roffey.⁵⁶ A more recent Lidar survey in 2011 identified considerable mine pit activity

⁵³ Jack, 1997, pp. 241-7.

⁵⁴ Hodgkinson, J. (2008) *The Wealden Iron Industry*, Stroud: Tempus, p. 110.

⁵⁵ Garraway Rice, 1915.

⁵⁶ Cleere, H. and Crossley, D. (1995) *The Iron Industry of the Weald*. Cardiff: Merton Priory Press, pp. 16-17, (hereafter Cleere and Crossley, 1995).

the Forest, identifying 28 sites that were particularly dense in the Colgate area (see figure 4.13).⁵⁷

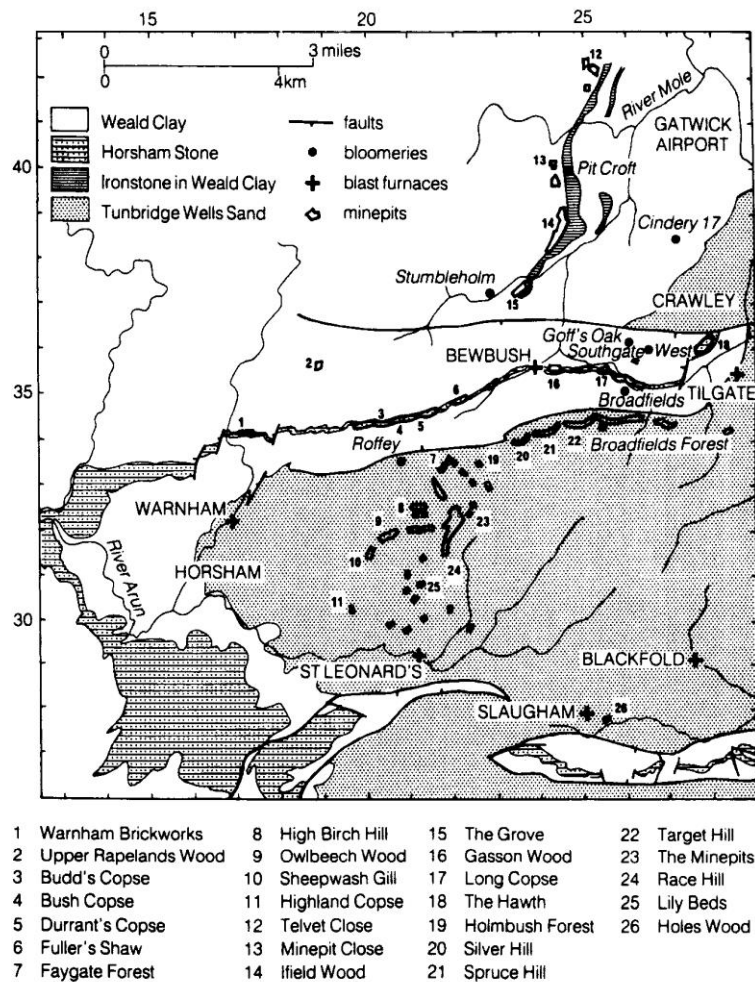


Fig.7 Minepits in the Horsham-Crawley area, based on Worssam 1972: figs.2 and 3 (by kind permission of the Council of the Geologists Association).

Figure 3.10: Minepits in the Horsham-Crawley area, based on Worssam 1972. Reproduced from Cleere, H and Crossley, D *The Iron Industry of the Weald*, 1985, 1995, page 17 Fig 7.

⁵⁷ Butler, C. Blandford, V. Locke, A. (2011) *A Lidar-enhanced Archaeological Survey of St. Leonard's Forest, West Sussex*. Chris Butler Archaeological Services for Forest Enterprise and Weald Forest Ridge Historic Environment Awareness Project. Figure 17, p 51. Unpublished accessible through: www.highweald.org/look-after/our-projects/weald-forest-ridge.

The landscape of the Forest was ideal for the next development of blast furnaces given that the blast of air could be delivered by water-powered bellows and the long narrow ghylls could be dammed to create a pond, with the dam or 'bay' forming a causeway. Furnaces were built near the bank on the side of the valley so that charcoal and iron ore could easily be loaded in the top of the chimney or flue via a charging platform. The higher temperatures of the blast furnaces over the bloomeries meant that the iron absorbed some carbon from the charcoal and so was brittle when cold. It therefore had to undergo another treatment, that of fining. This required the slabs of raw cast iron, called pigs or sows, to be melted and hammered thus reducing the amount of carbon in the iron. The wrought iron was then transferred to another hearth, a chafery, where it was hammered using a heavy water powered hammer into a bar for sale.

Two large iron works were developed in the south of the Forest around 1562 by John Broadbridge. Upper Forge was on Hammer Pond and had a forge, whilst Lower Forge on Hawkins Pond, and to the west of Upper Forge, had both forge and furnace. Hodgkinson wrote that many French migrants were being recruited in the first half of the 16th century from the Pays de Bray in north eastern Normandy, south of Dieppe, where they had learned valuable iron working skills, but lack of investment and the rising price of wood had closed the French furnaces. Migration reached its peak in the 1520s, although by that time many families had come over and settled, with their descendants often remaining in the iron trade. There is little doubt that this immigration had helped to develop the skills needed to manufacture ordnance, and a good export trade in guns and canon was established before the Spanish Armada in 1588. However, after this event the Government began to control the trade centrally through the issue of licenses for fear of supplying weapons to the enemy.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Hodgkinson, J. (2008) *The Wealden Iron Industry*. Stroud: Tempus, p. 71-4.

That the French were in St. Leonard's Forest is confirmed by the burial on 21st January, 1555-6 of 'Peter, a Frenche man, a colier that was cruelly murderyd in the Forest of Seynt Leonerde'.⁵⁹ Hey asserts that before the 19th century colliers were not exclusively coalminers but wood colliers or charcoal burners, so presumably Peter the Frenchman had been working in the Forest in the iron industry, either digging iron ore or making charcoal before he was murdered.⁶⁰ This incident may highlight the tensions that were beginning to develop between contested forest resources. The iron forges needed plentiful supplies of wood, iron ore and water power, this latter was limited and, as previously noted, Jack recorded how neighbouring ironmasters encroached on each other's catchment areas to the detriment of all.⁶¹

Most damaging for the survival of St. Leonard's Forest as a woodland landscape with valuable timber was the ownership of the Forest passing from the 4th Duke of Norfolk to the Crown. In 1561 the Duke offered the Forest and parks to the Crown in exchange for his debts and stated that there were 'plenty of woods for fortifications or ships'. Once the Crown had full control it was then leased and sublet, Sir John Caryll obtaining the greater part including Sedgwick and Chesworth, and then sublet further, although Caryll retained his right to hawk, hunt, fish and obtain deer. Sir William Ford was a lessee who reserved for himself the 'great timber' but sublet further to John Gratwick. The effect of this on the Forest was the over exploitation of resources through total lack of regulation. Legge gives an example of the enormous destruction of the Forest by stating the fact that in 1578 one lessee, Sir Thomas Sherley of Wiston, obtained a warrant to take 2000 cords of Beech, Birch and Oak a year, but by 1597 he had taken 75,016 and a half cords, or 180,000 tons of wood (a cord being 128 cubic feet or 2.4 tons), and so twice the amount he was authorised to take. Another lessee, Edward Caryll had taken 8,580 cords over this time making the total loss from these two

⁵⁹ Garraway Rice, 1915, p. 310.

⁶⁰ Hey, D. (ed.) (1996) *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History*,. Oxford University Press, p. 104.

⁶¹ Jack, 1997, pp. 241-7.

lessees of over ten million cubic feet of wood, or over 2,000,000 tons in this period alone.⁶²

Jack suggests that after the Duke of Norfolk's demise there is no clear evidence of the Forest courts meeting in order to oversee the granting of warrants and prosecution of transgressors. Thus it appears that Royal Court warrants were issued without any reference to the resources available or good management of the Forest environment. Protests were raised by the keepers and rangers particularly with regard to the effect this deforestation was having on the game and their ability to preserve it. The Deputy Surveyor of Wood, Roger Taverner, surveyed St. Leonard's Forest sometime between 1566 and 1572, around the time of the Duke's attainder, and Jack quotes him as assessing the Forest to be well supplied with desirable timber, oak and beech of great age. However, he warned against the taking of timber from the 'plumps' or clumps of trees, which grew on the exposed slopes as this would allow the wind to blow through and thus damage the trees and create erosion of the soil. He also warned against the taking of the undergrowth and said that this should also be properly managed. He proposed sensible changes to preserve the Forest and its timber so that a supply of wood to the Navy could be sustained.

Taverner's good advice was not heeded for long, warrants continued to be granted to such as Sir Thomas Sherley and the large timber trees were felled, wood continued to be taken for the charcoal burners and the iron forges, and wood was also taken for dwellings and raw materials by people who settled in and near the Forest. Zell quotes from an Admiralty report dated 1578 which stated that there were about 100 furnaces and iron mills in Sussex, Surrey and Kent, most of which were in Sussex, and which had greatly added to the 'spoil and overthrow of woods and principal timber'.⁶³

⁶² VCH Vol. II, p. 309. Legge does in fact say a loss of over a million cubic feet of wood but the figures he provides gives a total of over ten million rather than a million.

⁶³ Jack, 1997, pp. 241-7 and Zell, M. (1994, 2004) *Industry in the Countryside, Wealden Society in the Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 126-7.

As the Forest landscape deteriorated disputes arose over rights to the diminishing resources, so that Taverner stepped in to prosecute Roger Gratwick, ironmaster, for taking 1000 trees for buildings, these trees being selected by George Hall, a self-styled deputy surveyor, mainly for his own convenience in felling and working rather than good forestry. Another case was against Thomas Sherley of Wiston and John Middleton, ironmaster, so that a Commission of Inquiry at the end of the 16th century asked whether there was any wood standing after Sir Thomas Sherley's ravages. They found there was only 696 cords of wood worth anything and the destruction was irreparable. Straker noted that Arthur and John Middleton of Horsham and Stephen French of Chiddingly, ironmasters who had been granted a lease on the eastern part of St. Leonard's Forest around 1574, including Bewbush furnace, took advantage of their right to take timber and between 1589 and 1596 cut 56,000 cords of wood worth £4200. In addition they took 80 dead, stub and pollard trees for the repair of their houses. At the time of Thomas Middleton's sequestration in 1649 it was noted that 'Mr Thos. Middleton and his predecessors have so destroyed the woods and timber with more abounding upon the several parks of Shelley and Bewbush and neglected to follow the said furnace, that it has stood emptie for about seven yeares last past'.⁶⁴

In the 1630s, Sir Henry Compton had brought the matter of the Forest's mismanagement to the Exchequer Court, he complained of the decay of the park palings, deer and cattle coming onto his land and the burning of heath in 'new and unusual places'. Jack noted that Sir John Caryll had allowed the grazing of larger quantities of sheep and cattle in the Forest, and also sublet to farmers with permission to plough and improve the Forest land. So that by Charles I's reign (1625 -1649) a survey found no great trees or valuable timber save one old tree worth £1 and other young timber worth £30.⁶⁵

⁶³ Straker, 1969, p. 458-9.

⁶⁴ Jack, 1997, p. 245.

A Parliamentary survey of St. Leonard's Forest conducted during the Commonwealth in 1655 itemised two Iron forges in the Forest. The Upper Forge had two fires, two great bellows, one hammer, a warehouse, tenement with six rooms, a little barn, watercourses, an orchard and garden, all in one acre.⁶⁶ The Lower Forge had three fires, three bellows, one hammer, a little warehouse with yard and a little barn, watercourses and all again in one acre. Along with these forges, the surveyors noted the lessees' right to dig Horsham stone and iron ore from the Forest, to produce annually 250 loads of charcoal for the forges and 30 cords of wood. It is clear at the time of this survey there was a dispute over lease ownership of the forges and the Forest itself. Elizabeth I had granted the lease of the majority of the western part of the Forest to Sir John Carill,⁶⁷ however Charles I had given leases to William Collins and Edward Fenn, except for the iron forges which were retained by Sir John Carill and his heirs.

Thus the surveyors must have been surprised when they found the Lower Forge in the possession of Walter Pawley, who said he had purchased it from John Carill, heir of the original Sir John Carill, although there appeared to be a dispute about the boundary since he owned adjoining land, and one wonders whether it was a case of encroachment. William Pawley presented a number of 'ancient inhabitants' to back his claim, but the surveyors were not impressed and wanted proper documentation. They noted that one forge which used to be by Lower Forge had been destroyed through neglect and concluded their report with the remark that there had been a "very great destruction of the woods within the afforested Forest since the said grants (of leases) but there is sufficient coppice wood yet remaining to make good the said coals and woods if well preserved".⁶⁸ There was still some worth in the Forest in the mid-17th century but this was yet another warning that proper forest management was

⁶⁶ Hughes, A.F. (2005) St Leonards Forest, *Horsham Heritage*, Issue No. **12**, Spring, Horsham Museum Society, pp. 21-29. Dr Annabelle F. Hughes, a specialist in timber built houses, noted that this tenement with its six rooms probably still survives.

⁶⁷ Spelling of the Carill name differs from Carill to Carrill and Caryll and there are at least two generations of John Carill, and an Edward Caryll involved in taking leases.

⁶⁸ Daniel-Tyssen J.R. (1872) Parliamentary Surveys of the County of Sussex 1649-1653. *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **XXIV**, pp. 238-241 – the author has used normalised English in the quote.

necessary for the preservation of what wood was left. Both the forges were out of use by 1664 and derelict by 1667.⁶⁹ As the iron industry moved north the controlled coppicing ceased, and as Rackham noted, this was the time when the woodlands were at their most vulnerable to destruction, when industry had moved on and care was no longer taken of the woodland.⁷⁰

The iron industry had used quantities of wood in the furnaces and dug ore from the forest but resources were finite and had begun to run out, thus the industry moved on to exploit the larger deposits of coal and iron ore in the Midlands. It was however, the felling of large timber trees for wood sales that caused more damage to the existing woodland cover, and the opportunities this provided for over grazing, which effectively changed the landscape of the forest at this time.

3.3: Folklore

At the beginning of the 17th century there was a story that came out of St. Leonard's Forest, which in many ways harks back to early medieval fears of wild and dangerous forests. A pamphlet was published in London in 1614 that described a serpent, or dragon, living in the Forest 'in a vast and unfrequented place, heathie, vaultie, full of unwholesome shades, and over-growne hollowes'. The serpent was reported to have a territory of three or four miles and often had been seen near Faygate, to the north of the Forest, and only within half a mile of Horsham itself. There was a very detailed description of the beast, attributed to John Steel, Christopher Holder and a widow woman living near Faygate. The serpent or dragon was said to be nine feet or more in length, as thick as a cart axle, thicker in the middle, and to leave a noxious slimy trail. It was said to have a white circle of scales around its neck, black scales along its back and was red underneath. It could raise its head and neck and look about attentively, it had large feet, and more worryingly, two big bunches on either side of its body which, it

⁶⁹ Cleere and Crossley, 1995, p. 345.

⁷⁰ Rackham, O. (2006) *Woodlands*, London: Harper Collins, p. 124-133.

was supposed, would develop into wings. It spat venom to four rods (65 feet) distance and by doing so had killed a man, a woman and two large dogs, although it had not preyed upon these bodies as it was thought it fed on a rabbit warren which had been found 'much impaired'.⁷¹

In 1861 Lower wrote a paper about Sussex folklore and expressed the thought that superstition could have converted a misshapen log into a dragon, and the disappearance of rabbits could be attributed to poachers. He further dismissed Horsfield's suggestion that it was a lampoon of a petty tyrant, unnamed, of the district. It could of course have been a hoax, although Lower does consider it might have been encouraged, if not instigated, by smugglers and gamekeepers to keep people away from the Forest.⁷² However, Djabri points out that smuggling activity was not prevalent in the Forest until much later in the late 18th century. In researching the likely truth of the story, Djabri examined the Horsham Parish register for the period to identify the names of the people involved, and found some likely candidates. She also suggested that the rabbit warren in question could have been that situated on the Bewbush estate, north east of Colgate, the Sibball's Field Warren. There is certainly an unnerving ring of truth in such a detailed description of the serpent or dragon which Djabri thought could have been an African Black Cobra which she suggested may have arrived though ports on the south coast, and then been carried via the busy transport of iron and timber into the Forest.⁷³

Jones points out how common stories of dragons, wyverns and worms were in Britain at that time. Even as late as 1707 in America there were stories of 'dragons' and 'fiery

⁷¹ Dudley, H (1836, 1973) *The History and Antiquities of Horsham*, Horsham: J. Cramp Ltd. p. 46-51, (hereafter Dudley, 1836).

⁷² Lower, M.A. (1861) Old Speech and Manners in Sussex. *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, XIII, pp. 209-223 (hereafter Lower, 1861).

⁷³ Djabri, S.C. (2006) The 'Dragon' of St. Leonard's Forest. *Horsham Heritage*, Issue No. 14, Spring, Horsham Museum Society, pp. 3-16.

flying serpents' in New England's primeval forests.⁷⁴ The image of a winged serpent appeared in Edward Topsell's '*History of Serpents*' in 1608, only 6 years before the Horsham story was published, which looks remarkably like the description of the St. Leonard's Forest serpent (see figure 3.11). Although a description by Pliny the elder in his '*Natural History*' also has very similar characteristics. Perhaps this is not surprising given Jones' argument that a deep seated human fear of a composite predator, made up of the characteristics of snakes, birds and big cats haunt all humans, and follow us in myth through history and cultures.⁷⁵ With regard to the dragon of St. Leonard's Forest it could be suggested that anyone wanting to make up a story of dragons would be likely to quote these characteristics, but as to why they should create a story about a dragon is open to speculation.

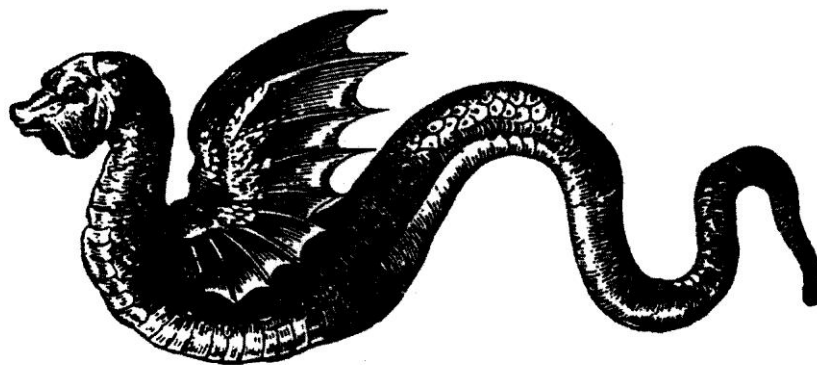


Figure 3.11: Image of a winged serpent from Edward Topsell's *Historie of Serpents* 1608. As reproduced in *An Instinct for Dragons*. David E. Jones 2000, p 142.

Stories of dragons in folklore tend to get mixed up with Knights or Saints who slay them, and this is the case with the St. Leonard's dragon. Crookshank told of St.

⁷⁴ Tuan, Y-F. (1979, 2013) *Landscapes of Fear*, Minneapolis, MN (USA): University of Minnesota Press, p. 81 (hereafter Tuan, 1979).

⁷⁵ Jones, E.J. (2000) *An Instinct for Dragons*. London: Routledge, pp. 138-147.

Leonard as a brave Saxon man living in Worth and battling Normans, wolves and hard winters, building the Church at Worth with his own hands, and finally settling as a much respected hermit in St. Leonard's Forest. Here he bade the angels stop the nightingales from singing, talked to the dragon and then shot it with a bow and arrow, which seemed a bit harsh, and finally on his death his hermit cell disappeared to be replaced by a carpet of Lily of the Valley.⁷⁶ Crookshank did not reference his sources and it is likely he had embellished folklore to improve his story, Symonds agrees and suggested it was a somewhat misconceived book, half myth and half historical novel.⁷⁷ Dudley wrote that St. Leonard prayed 'The adders never styng, Nor ye nyghtyngales synge'⁷⁸ and Lower repeated this with a slight twist in writing that the saint was asked what reward he would like for his services and he replied that he would like the eternal silence of the nightingale, which was granted within the Forest. Simpson tells of an old legend of St. Leonard, a French hermit, living in the Forest and undertaking a long and ferocious battle with the dragon, which he killed, and that Lily of the Valley sprang up where his blood was spilt.⁷⁹ Even today people repeat the myth that the flowers of the Lily of the Valley in the Forest are tinged pink due to the blood of the Saint.

One could consider such often repeated myths from a psychological perspective. Chalquist is an American environmental psychologist who developed the concept of terrapsychology which explores the relations between people and places, the human soul and the soul of locality. He suggests that myths are important in this regards as they indicate links between inner and outer, people and places, known and unknown. Or as Chalquist wrote, they rise from a 'kind of unconscious, a psychic layering of the world'. Place motifs such as the St. Leonard's Forest dragon continue to recur; the

⁷⁶ Crookshank, A.C. (1928) *Saint Leonard of Sussex* London: Arthur H. Stockwell.

⁷⁷ Symonds, R. (2012) The Story of St Leonard, *Horsham Heritage*, Issue No. 21, Autumn, Horsham Museum Society, pp. 3-12.

⁷⁸ Dudley, 1836, p. 46.

⁷⁹ Simpson, J. (2009) *Folklore of Sussex*, Stroud: The History Press, pp. 31-33.

dragon turns up in stories, names of public houses, sculptures and carved benches in the Forest. However, the meanings of such a motif would need further study.⁸⁰

One of the most chilling legends, possibly invented by smugglers, is that of the headless horseman. Dudley describes it well when he wrote that it was woe to the luckless wight, who should cross St. Leonard's Forest alone on horseback during the night, for no sooner had he entered 'its darksome precincts, than a horrible decapitated spectre' of Squire Paulett jumps up on his horse, sits on the saddle behind him, and no amount of prayers or menaces can dislodge him until out of the Forest. Although Captain William Powlett of the Horse Grenadiers in the reign of George I inherited the Forest and lived at New Lodge, he died in 1746 complete with his head, and it is not clear how or why this myth came to be.⁸¹ Tuan suggested that ghosts are the last of the supernatural beings to lose their grip on the landscapes of Europe, fading slowly from the imagination and only kept alive by storytelling. This story of the headless horseman would certainly have kept respectable people indoors at night allowing the smugglers to go about their illegal trade without hindrance.⁸² There are more myths concerning the straight track called Mick Mills Race in the centre of the Forest which are discussed in the next chapter.

3.4: A Changed Landscape

It is clear from the surveys of the 17th century that St. Leonard's Forest was becoming less of a valuable and sustainable ancient timber forest and more devalued woodland of secondary growth and heathland. Jack's whole premise was that St. Leonard's Forest was an example of late medieval ecological destruction and it is hard not to agree with her. There were repeated warnings throughout the 16th and 17th centuries that the mismanagement of the Forest would end up destroying it, these warnings

⁸⁰ Chalquist, C. (2007) *Terrapsychology, Reengaging the Soul of Place*, New Orleans, USA: Spring Journal Books, pp. 11, 60-83.

⁸¹ Dudley, 1836, p. 45-6 and Lower, 1861, p 222-3

⁸² Tuan, 1979, pp. 126-8.

came from those who knew about forest management, the surveyors of the woodlands, the rangers and some landowners, but sadly the rising price of wood and the promise of individual profits won over the future sustainability of the forest ecology, a struggle that still has resonances today in increasingly fragile environments around the world.

Arable improvement of perceived wasteland had been on the agenda since the Commonwealth, driven by the search for improved rents and profitability. The Westons, Sir Richard and his sons John and George, who leased the Forest from the Crown initially in 1634 and then during the Commonwealth, made attempts to improve the land in the Forest, mainly by experimenting with different manuring techniques on a sandy soil. However they had little success as what was needed in addition was effective drainage, which did not develop until the next century. However, occupation of the Forest had been begun by Sir Thomas Seymour in the 16th century and by the beginning of the 17th century Brandon estimated that some 2500 acres of St. Leonard's Forest had been let as farmland with about forty small holdings set up as farms and cottages, mostly for part time iron workers. However, Sir Edward Greaves, the next incumbent, followed a policy of establishing larger rabbit warrens to enhance his profits rather than agricultural improvement which had largely failed.⁸³

The iron forges had closed and with them the economic imperative for coppiced wood, new growth of woodland was not protected against grazing of sheep, cattle and rabbits and so heathland expanded. It is clear there were rabbit warrens at the beginning of the 17th century although they are not noted on early maps. On the Bewbush estate to the north east of the Forest was Sibballs Field Warren, identified first in 1608 and said by 1650 to be of 834 acres and well stocked. It appeared that

⁸³ Brandon, P (2003) *The Kent and Sussex Weald*, Chichester: Phillimore and Co. Ltd., p.123.

there were more warrens set up in the centre of the forest with names such as Great Warren being a good indication of size and importance.⁸⁴

In the depositions taken in 1684 by the Exchequer for the Crown with regard to mismanagement of the Forest under lease, a witness said that the Forest 'hath been a warren for near 40 years past' while another said 'that there is not now or hath been for several years last past soe many coneyes by half in the said forest as there were about 20 years ago'. Sir Edward Greaves, who died in 1680, passed his estate on to his daughter Mary, who was married to a Peter Calfe, and it was this couple who were the defendants in the case. Many of the witnesses talked of great waste and destruction in the Forest, and that this was due to the sale of timber such as 200 loads of beech timber and then mismanagement of new growth by as not fencing the coppices or underwood after felling, keeping cattle and sheep in the Forest, and burning the heath to produce better feed for the rabbits. Others said that Peter Calfe was not to blame, Edward Garston of Nuthatch who had been his Wood Reeve said in the two years he had worked for him he had not cut more than 100 cords of wood and the underwood was well protected, but one detects some personal motive in not condemning himself as well as his employer, Peter Calfe. John Stone of Beeding said that the coppices of the wood were utterly destroyed by Captain Stollman under the 'Usurper' i.e. Oliver Cromwell, for want of fencing and preservation. Although some warreners said they did not set fire to the heath, Nicholas Michell, warrener of Beeding, said that he and other warreners did usually burn the heath in the plain part of the Forest to make feed for the rabbits and sheep but never set fire to the heath amongst the birches and coppices although several times they had caught fire by accident, and he did not think it did either any damage or good. However, there may well have been too many 'accidents' which would have prevented the regeneration of woodland leaving the areas of heathland particularly suitable for rabbit warrens.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ VCH Vol. VI.3, p. 15.

⁸⁵ The National Archives (TNA) E134/36Chas2/East22

Perhaps the last word in the destruction of the medieval St. Leonard's Forest should go to Michael Drayton, 17th century topographical poet, who wrote of the destruction of all the forests on the Sussex ridge in his poem *Poly-Olbion*, an epic comment on the landscape changes in each county of England, published in 1612 and 1622. He imagines the distressed spirits of the trees and lays the blame at the door of the iron foundries and changing agricultural practice. The social ecologist Heller, might see this poem as the romanticising of nature and forest as women, in need of rescuing, or in need of a hero to slay the dragon of new industrial technology, a romanticised version of green concerns that still echo today, and thus a distraction from the real ills of disenfranchisement of the poor from economic and political democracy. However, Dasgupta suggests that Drayton's poem is a radical departure from previous landscape writing. Whilst acknowledging his poignant awareness of landscape change and destruction, she sees a real and modern concern with the environment and its interface with the economic, political and social changes of the day, and the ethical dilemmas these inevitably cause.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Heller, C. (1999) *Ecology of Everyday Life, Rethinking the Desire for Nature*, London: Black Rose Books, pp.13-39, and Dasgupta, S. (2010) Drayton's 'Silent Spring': *Poly-Olbion* and the Politics of Landscape. *The Cambridge Quarterly* **39(2)** pp. 152-171.

'The daughters of the Weald
 (That in their heavy breasts had long their griefs concealed),
 Foreseeing their decay each hour so fast come on,
 Under the axe's stroke, fetched many a grievous groan.
 When the anvil's weight, and hammer's dreadful sound,
 Even rent the hollow woods and shook the queachy ground;
 So that trembling nymphs, oppressed through ghastly fear,
 Ran madding to the downs, with loose dishevelled hair

 'Jove's oak, the warlike ash, veined elm, the softer beech,
 Short hazel, maple plain, light asp, the bending wych,
 Tough holly, and smooth birch, must altogether burn;
 What should the builder serve, supplies the forger's turn,
 When under public good, base private gain takes hold,
 And we, poor woful woods, to ruin lastly sold'.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ As quoted in Lucas, E.V. (1904) *Highways and Byways in Sussex*, London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., p. 125.

CHAPTER 4

Georgian Aspiration and the Impulse for Change: St. Leonard's Forest from 1750 to 1830

'It was a bare heath with here and there, in the better parts of it, some scrubby birch'

William Cobbett, from *Rural Rides*, 31 July, 1823.¹

By 1750 St. Leonard's Forest had been stripped of most of its valuable timber trees, and this, plus the mismanagement of much of what was left, produced a poor heathland landscape deemed suitable only for the production of rabbits. In the mid-17th century, Sir Richard Weston had come back from the Netherlands urging the growing of flax which was regarded, with hemp, as a profitable venture. He recommended improving the Forest soil through experimenting with the application of dung from sheep and lime from dug marl, but the damp climate and waterlogging militated against any real improvement given the lack of later drainage technology, and the subsequent owner of the Forest, Sir Edward Greaves, was keener on rabbits for an income.²

Smallholdings had grown around the edges of the Forest instigated initially by Sir Thomas Seymour. As mentioned in chapter 3, Brandon estimated that 2500 acres were let for farming and cottages, about 22 dwellings on unimproved land which would have been worked by paring away the bracken, burning and ploughing in the ashes.³ Warrens for the production of rabbits were the business of the central parts of the Forest, as will be discussed later in this chapter, and there is limited evidence for any other agricultural, industrial or social activity in the Forest for at least 50 years, until the turn of the century. The late 18th century appeared to be a period of slow change

¹ Cobbett, W. (1830, 1979) *Rural Rides*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., p. 113 (hereafter Cobbett, 1830).

² Weston, R. (1650) *A Discours of husbandrie used in Brabant and Flanders* London: William du Gard, p. 12-13.

³ Thirsk, J. (1984) *The Rural Economy of England, Collected Essays*. London: Hambledon Press, p. 210 and Brandon, P. (1974) *The Sussex Landscape*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, p. 162 (hereafter Brandon, 1974).

in the damaged Forest landscape as rabbit warrens slowly lost their importance, agricultural techniques improved although the forest soil was still difficult to earn a living from. The hinterland of the Forest with its close proximity to the market town of Horsham, and improving communications routes with the fast expanding city of London, set the scene for further Forest landscape changes in the 19th century. Thus by examining the economic and social developments in the locality of the Forest, such as Horsham town, Horsham common and routeways, it is possible to better understand the coming transformation of the 19th century.

The following sections in this chapter therefore discuss the infrastructure and trade in and around the town of Horsham, routes to and from this growing market town, some of which were across the Forest. Markets and fairs, industry and commerce, are considered and give a picture of the Forest at the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century. The chapter then continues by addressing society and community. Questions are asked about how the middle classes in and around Horsham and St. Leonard's Forest were growing in number and demanding more goods and services, and how the clergy were concerned about population growth and immorality in the Forest. Private estates are identified within the Forest and their management considered. The impact of the French and Napoleonic War on both town, common and Forest is discussed, and the close proximity between these three areas is noted. The chapter ends with a consideration of the establishment and demise of the rabbit warrens of St. Leonard's Forest.

4.1: Infrastructure and trade

A glimpse of St. Leonard's Forest and its context in the year 1751 comes from the diaries of a Dr John Burton, written by him in Greek and translated by W.H. Blaauw in the mid-19th century. Dr Burton was a tutor in Greek at Oxford University and thereafter a Fellow of Eton College, vicar of Mapledurham, Oxfordshire, and Rector of Worplesham, Surrey. He had reason to travel to Sussex from Oxford in the summer of 1751 as he wished to visit his mother who had remarried Dr John Bear, the Rector of

Shermanbury, a village situated to the south of the Forest and Cowfold. He travelled by horseback via Henley, Windsor, Hampton Court, and Epsom where he wrote that he stayed with the hospitable Beauclerk family, who were later associated with St. Leonard's Forest through their purchase of the southern part of the Aldridge estate. From Box Hill and Leith Hill on the North Downs he came down into Sussex and found roads which were 'most abominable'. Dr Burton described how their horses had difficulty negotiating the muddy tracks, 'sliding and tumbling on their way, and almost on their haunches, with all their haste got on but slowly'. He and his companion arrived in Horsham which he described as 'the metropolis of all in the Weald of Anderida, ancient and populous'. He noted the presence of the County Gaol, Assize Courts and the weekly market where he saw London salesmen buying, with ready cash, many thousand chickens. He also commented on the 'famous' Horsham stone, split and used for house tiles, and the thriving trout in the river Arun. He leaves a picture of a prosperous small market town, somewhat cut off by its poor roads from the outside world, but nonetheless attracting London traders. Dr Burton moved south from Horsham town and travelled through St. Leonard's Forest which he described as 'extensive and easily travelled through', presumably due to its sandy soil, heathland and treeless ridges, after which he found the roads particularly impassable causing 'tumbles and much muddiness'.⁴

Morris noted in the introduction to Celia Fiennes' journals that the 'worst horror was the liquid mud of Sussex where the Horsham Assizes were held once a year at Midsummer'.⁵ The Spring, or Lent Assizes, were held in March at either Horsham or East Grinstead but due to the continuing difficulty of access they were switched in 1735 to be always held at East Grinstead with the summer Assizes alternate years at Horsham and Lewes.⁶ In 1752 Horace Walpole had a dreadful experience travelling through Sussex at the height of summer and so wrote that if one loved good roads,

⁴ Blaauw, W.H. (1856) Extracts from the 'Iter Sussexiense' of Dr John Burton, *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, **VIII**, pp. 250-265 (hereafter Blaauw, 1856).

⁵ Morris, C. (ed.) (1947) *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes*, London: The Cresset Press, p. xxxi.

⁶ Albery, W. (1947) *A Millennium of Facts in the History of Horsham and Sussex 947-1947*, Brighton: Southern Publishing, p. 217 (hereafter Albery, 1947).

conveniences, good inns, plenty of postilions and horses then never go into Sussex adding that 'Sussex is a great damper of curiosity'.⁷ Daniel Defoe also added his comments to the state of the roads noting that once he saw a large tree being pulled by 22 oxen and which he suggested would take two or three years to complete its journey through the Weald to the port at Chatham.⁸ The Rev. Arthur Young wrote that before 1756 the London to Horsham road was so 'execrably bad that whoever went on wheels, were forced to go round by Canterbury, which is one of the most extraordinary circumstances that the history of non-communication in this kingdom can furnish'.⁹ This does seem somewhat of an exaggeration but the point is thoroughly made that the roads were bad and needed improvement. Brandon suggested that it was the primitive roads that isolated Sussex and made it a self-supporting, rural county with deep roots in Roman and Saxon tradition that lingered to manifest itself in aspects of culture in the late 19th century.¹⁰

a) Routeways

Communications, particularly with the expanding capital of London, were crucial to the economic, social and cultural development of the area. It is clear from these 18th century diary accounts that roads linking Horsham to the outside world would hold back this development if something was not done. It is useful to know from Dr Burton's diary that tracks through the Forest remained dry and manageable in the 1750s due to the underlying geology and topography. The main routes through the Forest commonly used were indicated by Ivan Margary, who, in examining Richard Budgen's map of 1724 (which is reproduced in his cousin's map book, see footnote 12) noticed small numbers appearing on the map. He doubted that these were milestone indicators and thought that they linked routes, thus he understood them to be recommended routes. Such a recommended route was that from north Horsham to

⁷ Brandon, P. (2003) *The Kent and Sussex Weald*. Chichester: Phillimore, p. 178 (hereafter Brandon, 2003).

⁸ Defoe, D. (1731, 1962) *Tour thro' the whole Island of Great Britain, divided into circuits or journies Vol. I*, London: J.M. Dent, pp. 128-9 (hereafter Defoe, 1731).

⁹ Young, Rev. A. (1813, 1970) *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Sussex*, Newton Abbot: David & Charles Reprints, p. 418 (hereafter Young, 1813).

¹⁰ Brandon, P. (2010) *The Discovery of Sussex*, Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., p. 9 (hereafter Brandon, 2010).

Crawley through the edge of St. Leonard's Forest, past Buchan Hill, which was privately turnpiked in 1795. Another recommended route went to East Grinstead from Horsham through Colgate in the Forest and Pease Pottage out through Worth and Crawley Down. A southerly route went from Horsham into the Forest and over the embankments of Hawkins and Hammer ponds, skirting Plummers Plain, and on to Slaugham to link with the London to Brighton road. Both of these routes were later turnpiked in 1771 and parts of the latter in 1792.¹¹

Gardner and Gream's map of 1795, and the Ordnance Survey Old Series one inch map published in 1813, show that there were in addition to the two main routes described above, numerous other pathways or routes through the Forest (see figures 4.1 and 4.2).¹² The earlier map shows eight paths radiating out from New Lodge, at this time the home of John Clater Aldridge, MP from 1784-1790 for Queenborough, a rotten borough on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent, and then MP for Shoreham, Sussex, 1790-2, he was also the principal storekeeper to HM Ordnance, and died in 1795. The house was inherited by his son, John Aldridge the younger, Captain in the Royal Sussex Militia.¹³ One path links to Stone Lodge on the Horsham-Colgate-Pease Pottage main route, another runs across the centre of the Forest linking New Lodge to Lodge House and on to Grouts Gate.¹⁴ Another runs to the south and then loops north to link in with Sandy Gate (spelling unclear) and running parallel to the previous path. These three routes all end at the London to Brighton road. Most of the paths run south west to north east across the Forest, although there are exceptions, one strong diagonal path follows a forest ridge and runs from the north east at Pease Pottage gate, through Grouts Gate to between the two ponds and end at the southern road. This cross Forest route is one of the few that survives into the 21st century as Grouse Road. Another exception is a

¹¹ Margary, I.D. (1971) Traffic Routes in Sussex, 1724, as shown by 'Milestones' on Richard Budgen's Map, *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, CIX, pp. 20-3.

¹² Margary, H. (ed.) and Skelton, R.A (1970) *Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Maps in the County of Sussex: a collection of reproductions of printed maps published between the years 1575 and 1825*, Kent: Lympne Castle, Maps 16 and 20.

¹³ Elwes D.G.C. and Robinson C.J. (1879) *A History of the Castles, Mansions and Manors of Western Sussex*, London: Longman, p. 29 (hereafter Elwes, 1879) and Comber, J. (1931) *Sussex Genealogies, Horsham Centre*, Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd., pp. 8-12 (hereafter Comber, 1931).

¹⁴ Although this is Grouts on the 1795 map, it seems likely that the spelling is in fact Grouse as it is situated on what became known as Grouse Road.

path that runs north to south from Holmbush, home of William Manners in 1795, south across the Forest, the central straight run being known as Mick Mills' Race, and then running down to meet the southern road near Goldings Farm (see figure 4.1).

The 1813 Ordnance Survey map shows fewer main pathways or routes but more links between them. The Aldridge mansion of New Lodge, then the home of John Aldridge, the younger's widow, Anna Maria, and his infant son, Robert, has more formalised parkland and routes across it, and Stone Lodge is still linked to it. Grouts Gate and Sandy Gate are no longer marked, but Hyde Farm and three enclosures are now shown in the south east corner, all linked by a cross-Forest path to the London-Brighton road. Plummers Plain to the south of the Horsham-Slaughtam road is shown as a barren triangle of land with routes around the edge and one diagonally through the middle, below this is a more wooded area with two main routes to Crabtree and Patch Gate, one of which is the Brighton road from Horsham, through Crabtree and Henfield. There are numerous smaller routes through this southern part of the Forest which was later to become known as the Leonardslee estate. Interestingly, the earlier 1795 map shows this area as heathland with small field enclosures to the east and few footpaths, suggesting some consolidation of parcels of land had occurred between 1795 and 1813 (see figure 4.2).



Figure 4.1: Section of plate 16, William Gardner and Thomas Gream Sussex map, scale one inch to one mile, 1795, showing St. Leonard's Forest with footpaths and forest ridges shown. Reproduced from Margary, H. & Skelton, R.A.(1970) *Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Maps in the County of Sussex*.



Figure 4.2: Section of plate 20, Ordnance Survey, Old Series one inch map, scale one inch to one mile, 1813, showing St. Leonard's Forest with footpaths and forest ridges shown. Reproduced from Margary, H. & Skelton, R.A. (1970) *Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Maps in the County of Sussex*.

The first Turnpike Act for Sussex was passed in 1696 with a preamble that noted the road to London through Steyning, Horsham and Crawley was 'very ruinous and almost impassable' and beyond the existing laws for repairing. In the High Weald, roads could be broad tracks, broadening out to find a firm surface hence often 60 or more feet wide (18 metres). Alternatively, depending on the underlying geology, they could be sunken hollows, the surface worn down by heavy wheeled traffic. Repair of roads was the responsibility of the parish through the levying of rates and supply of parish labourers, but lack of skilled workers, funds and lack of suitable hard material, such as limestone and Horsham sandstone, made systematic repair difficult.¹⁵ Burstow (1826-1914) wrote that Horsham stone was plentiful but tended not to be used for road building, presumably as it was more valuable as roof tiles and pavements. He observed that during this early period only the new turnpike roads had hard surfaces and the country lanes were just as difficult to negotiate.¹⁶ This is borne out by the fact that many of the cases coming before the Quarter Sessions in the years 1767 to 1800 concerned the repair of roads.¹⁷

Pawson identifies two main periods for the development of turnpikes, 40% of them were laid in the period 1750 to 1770 and the remainder after that. The last turnpikes were in 1836 and two of these were in Sussex. Adoption of turnpikes tended to be London centric due to the heavy traffic flow connecting the capital with provincial cities, ports and agricultural markets. However, an incentive to adopt was also due to the pressure on local parishes as internal movements increased, and the advantage of a turnpike trust was that it charged tolls in order to finance road repair, maintenance and improvement.¹⁸

¹⁵ Fuller, G.J. (1953) The Development of Roads in the Surrey-Sussex Weald and Coastlines between 1700 and 1900, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, No. 19, pp. 37-49, and Pawson, E. (1975) The Turnpike Trusts of the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Innovation and Diffusion, Research Paper 14, School of Geography, University of Oxford, pp. 11-13, (hereafter Pawson, 1975).

¹⁶ Albery, W. (ed.) (1975) *Reminiscences of Horsham being Recollections of Henry Burstow, The Celebrated Bellringer and Songsinger*, Norwood, Pa (USA): Norwood Editions, p. 19, (hereafter Albery, 1975).

¹⁷ Pers. Comm. 13.5.2012 by Sue Djabri with reference to CD Rom of Quarter Sessions in Sussex by Michael Burchall accessible through the Sussex Family History Group.

¹⁸ Pawson, 1975, pp. 13-35.

In early 1755 a Bill was presented in Parliament by Sir Lionel Pilkington, MP for Horsham, requesting leave to improve the Horsham, Warnham, Capel, Dorking Leatherhead, Epsom road, and which was described in the petition as having become ruinous in many parts very 'narrow and incommodious'. This evidence was accepted, the Bill was granted and a Turnpike Trust appointed.¹⁹ The Rev. Arthur Young was astounded that there was any opposition to this turnpike, but thought that this was soon overcome by the rise in farm rents per acre from 7s to 11s. A legal Market Deed was drawn up and signed by 80 residents fearing that Horsham market would be bypassed and goods, particularly meat, sold direct from the farm gate. Ivan Margary noted that Turnpikes were initially unpopular as people were at that time almost free of taxes and restrictions so that the tolls were regarded as irksome and repressive.²⁰ Knight suggested that this opposition was probably an anxiety due to the lack of financial infrastructure and experience for what was effectively a mortgaged road.²¹ Pawson notes that highways had a 'right of passage' for every subject of the Crown and this was a communal property right, nevertheless he found little evidence to support riot and protest against the turnpikes. Young also noted and approved the impact of better communications with London writing that 'before the communication with London, low rents, low prices, a confined consumption, and no improvements: open the communication, and high rents, high prices, a rapid consumption, and numerous improvements'. This is an important point with regard to the impulse for change that was coming, not least to the Forest.²²

The first local Turnpike was soon followed by others. Margary saw a pattern in their establishment in Sussex. He identified that the first links were from London to the

¹⁹ An Act for widening and repairing the Road leading from Horsham in the County of Sussex, through Capel, Dorking, Mickleham and Leatherhead, to the Watch-house in Ebbisham in the County of Surrey; and from Capel to Stone Street, in the Parish of Ockley in the said County of Surrey, 1755, House of Lords Journal Vol. **28**, pp. 362 -381. Accessible through: ProQuest House of Commons Parliamentary Papers.

²⁰ Margary, I. (1950) The Development of Turnpike Roads in Sussex, *Sussex Notes and Queries*. **XIII**, p. 49 (hereafter Margary, 1950).

²¹ Knight, J. (2006) *Horsham's History Vol 1 Prehistory to 1790AD*, Horsham: Horsham District Council, p. 204, (hereafter Knight, 2006a).

²² Pawson, 1975, pp. 11, 20, and Young, 1813, p 418.

Assize Towns, such as Horsham. Next were the ones heading to the coastal towns and in particular Brighton. Finally a network of cross links, and after 1800 schemes became bolder and included new straight lengths and improvement to routes. Pawson notes that a nationwide turnpike network was recognisable by 1750 and extensive by 1770.²³ Locally, in 1764 the road running from Horsham south of the Forest to Shipley, and on through West Grinstead, Ashurst, Steyning, Bramber and Beeding was turnpiked, connecting the farming hinterland to the market at Horsham. The route through the north of the Forest from Horsham, Colgate and Cuckfield was then turnpiked in 1771, followed by the Brighton road in 1792 which connected Horsham through Crabtree and Henfield to the newly fashionable resort in Brighton. Thereafter the road to Worthing through West Grinstead was turnpiked in 1802 and to Guildford in 1809.

These developments offered opportunities for new residents to settle nearby and so some of the costs of road building were borne by them in order to make their properties more accessible. For example, seven miles of the Horsham to Crawley turnpike, which superseded the 1771 Horsham-Colgate-Cuckfield road, was fully paid for by Thomas Broadwood in 1823. The building of this turnpike was undertaken by J.L. McAdam who was promoted by Thomas Broadwood for his skill and invention in new roadmaking skills. The skill of McAdam was the innovative and economical use of successive layers of small stones to make firm, dry and well drained road beds. Thomas Broadwood subsequently built his mansion called Holmbush House, designed by Francis Edwards, in 1826 on the northern slopes of St. Leonard's Forest near the site of an older house. Likewise, the two sons of Sir William Burrell, MP and antiquarian, built fashionable residences at Knepp Castle and West Grinstead Park respectively, after financing the part of the Horsham to Worthing turnpike which allowed them good access to these estates.²⁴

²³ Margary, 1950, pp. 50-1, and Pawson, 1975, p. 34.

²⁴ Albery, 1947, pp. 604-5; Brandon, 2010, pp. 58-9, and Elwes, 1879, p. 28.

The improved turnpike roads made coach travel easier and quicker, and in effect opened up Sussex and Horsham to travellers and commerce. Writing in 1868 Dorothy Hurst noted that for some years the turnpike roads had been very good and before the railways several stage coaches passed through Horsham on their way from London to Brighton, London to Worthing and Bognor, and from Brighton to Windsor and Oxford.²⁵ Indeed, Albery gives more detail; by 1775 there was an early coach from The Talbot in Southwark once a week, another from The Falcon in Southwark three times a week, and a faster earlier coach from The Spreadingeagle in the City twice a week. The length of time to get to London was about five hours and the price at this time between six and seven shillings. Mail coaches developed faster travel after the 1820s on the Macadam roads reaching 10 to 12 miles an hour while loaded with passengers and luggage.²⁶

Canal building was particularly prevalent in Britain in the mid-18th century, but Horsham and the Forest did not benefit from this. The Forest itself was on high ground, so any canal building would have been focused on the Arun valley to the west of Horsham. Defoe had noted in 1727 that wheat was more expensive in Horsham than in Guildford because of the transport difficulties of moving grain in and out of Horsham, and in particular the lack of water transport.²⁷ Guildford was to benefit further from improvements to the Wey and Arun canal which eventually linked the south coast to the Thames by 1816, the impetus being the vulnerability of cargo on the Channel at the time of the Napoleonic wars.²⁸ The Duke of Norfolk made several attempts, and failed, to gain enough subscription money to extend the river Arun from Newbridge Wharf at Wisborough Green through Slinfold to Farthing Bridge on the Guildford Road to the north west of Horsham, which would have connected Horsham to the sea at Shoreham. Later, in 1826 the navigation of the Adur was extended to Baybridge Wharf in West Grinstead and this was as near as navigable water came to Horsham. Within 20 years the railway would in any case take over as the most efficient

²⁵ Hurst, D. (1868) *Horsham: its History and Antiquities*, London: William Macintosh, p. 37 (hereafter Hurst, 1868).

²⁶ Albery, 1947, p. 609.

²⁷ Brandon, 2003, pp. 177-8.

²⁸ Short, B. (2006) *England's Landscape, The South East*, London: Harper Collins, p. 155.

and economical method of transport, and would open up the Forest through stations at Faygate and Horsham to the modern concept of the commuter, living in the tranquil Forest and working on London.²⁹

b) Markets and fairs

Markets and fairs were particularly important to Horsham town, and its hinterland which included St. Leonard's Forest. Their importance was in developing economic prosperity given its isolation on the edge of the Weald, and the town's potential future growth due to the proximity to London and Brighton, both centres of growing consumer demand and work opportunities. Historically, and according to Hurst, there were five annual fairs in Horsham.³⁰ One fair situated in the south of the Forest was the St. Leonard's Forest Fair, held since at least the mid-15th century on Saint Leonard's day of 6th November for the sale of feral horses. The date was changed to the 17th November after the 1752 change to the Gregorian calendar and correction of 11 days. The fair moved away from the Forest to the south east of the Common near St. Leonard's Road, and then when the Common was enclosed in 1813 it was moved to a site on the Brighton Road opposite the Queen's Head public house on the edge of town. For some time this fair had been trading in Welsh cattle as well as horses, but it seems there were other goods for sale. There is a report in the recollections of Henry Burstow, local boot maker and diarist, that at the November fair of 1825 a journeyman blacksmith exhibited his wife and three children for sale. The deal was done for £2 and five shillings for the wife and one child, and although local people were concerned enough to contact a Magistrate about the sale, nothing was done, and indeed sales of women were recorded both before and after this example in the July fairs.³¹

Thompson wrote that there were two types of wife sale in this period, one very public in the market place with the woman delivered in a halter around her neck or waist,

²⁹ Albery, 1947, p. 606.

³⁰ Hurst, 1868, p. 35.

³¹ Albery, 1975, pp. 73-4.

which was the 'ritual' type of sale, and the other a more private agreement but with a contract signed by witnesses and usually conducted in a public house or bar. Thompson suggests that the 'ritual' sale was an invented tradition in the late seventeenth century possibly as a response to war and the frequent breakdown of marriages as it was a quick and public method of obtaining a divorce and re-marriage, part of the agreement being that the wife consented, and often was already in a relationship with the purchaser. The increased reporting of wife sales in the early nineteenth century was a reflection of the rising current of disapproval fed, Thompson wrote, by evangelical, rationalist and radical or trade union sources. This, he suggested, led to the cessation of the practice and possibly drove it into more secretive places.³² Thomas Hardy used the sale of a wife as the major construct of his novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, published in 1886 but set two generations earlier in the 1820s, and which explored the social and individual consequences of such an event when lightly undertaken.³³

Burstow pointed out that fairs and markets were important not only economically but as a means of providing fun and entertainment for the working population. He stated that the business of the July Fair, which was mainly sheep trading, was confined to one day, whilst the pleasure fair could last from three to nine days, dependant on what day of the week July 18th fell. Booths and stalls were set up in the Carfax and adjoining roads, these provided food, entertainment and sport. Drinking appears to have featured heavily and was available not only in the booths but in temporary drinking houses identified by boughs of greenery above the doors, and hence called bough houses.³⁴

Dudley gave a very brief description of four annual Horsham fairs that confirm other accounts of a pre-Whitsun fair on April 5th for sheep and lambs, one on July 18th for

³² Thompson, E.P. (1993) *Customs in Common, Studies in Traditional Popular Culture*, New York: The New Press, pp. 404-466 (hereafter Thompson,1993).

³³ Hardy, T. (1886, 2003) *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, pp. 3-15.

³⁴ Albery, 1975, pp. 70-1.

cattle and pedlars, a cherry fair on September 5th for cattle, and presumably for cherries as well. He dated the November fair as the 27th for cattle and toys and stated that there was also a monthly market for cattle on the last Tuesday of every month. He did not mention the St. Leonard's fair in November, but by the early 19th century this had moved to the town, and perhaps coincided with the 27th.³⁵

Weekly markets were in addition to the annual and monthly markets described. Three of these weekly markets were established at some point in the medieval period, the Saturday market being the most successful and thriving on the sale of poultry to London traders. This increased with the improved roads in the 18th century and Horsham began to take the Dorking corn trade as well as its poultry trade. By 1832 the Saturday market specialised in corn and a Monday market specialised in poultry.³⁶ Hurst tells us that there was also a fortnightly fat stock market on a Wednesday which sold remarkably fine animals in the run up to Christmas. In addition to the thriving market for grain, poultry and fat stock, there is the report from Rev. Arthur Young in 1813 that from Horsham Forest and Ashdown Forest considerable quantities of rabbits were sent to London.³⁷

c) Industry, commerce and the common

Thomas Charles Medwin, an attorney with a considerable private practice in Horsham prepared a draft list in November 1784 of all the tradesmen in the town. This was on the request of William Bailey for his first nationwide trade directory. It gives a very useful insight into the commercial businesses of Horsham at that time and in fact Medwin concluded his list by noting 'Horsham is a prime market in Sussex for grain and poultry. The only manufacturing here are leather, hats, sacks and brooms'. Indeed, the list of 19 trades noted two tanners, one tanner and currier, one sack manufacturer,

³⁵ Dudley, H. (1836, 1973) *History and Antiquities of Horsham and its Vicinity*, Horsham: Jury Cramp Ltd., p. 72, (hereafter, Dudley, 1836).

³⁶ Hudson, T.P. (ed.) (1986) *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex*, Vol. VI Part 2, The Institute of Historical Research by Oxford University Press, p. 172, (hereafter VCH Vol. VI.2 and Windrum, A. (1978) *Horsham, An Historical Survey*, Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., p. 118.

³⁷ Young, 1813, p. 391.

one hat manufacturer amongst single drapers, grocers, mercers, cutlers, builders, and maltsters. Professionals were also listed and there were in fact three Attorneys and two Surgeons. One highly skilled watch maker is also mentioned. Perhaps not surprisingly a Timber Merchant is listed, presumably sourcing at least some timber from St. Leonard's Forest.³⁸

Broom manufacturers used natural materials of birch, hazel, heath and willow which were available on the Common. Garth Groombridge, in researching his family history, noted that broom making, or broom dashing, was one of the traditional trades in Horsham. He published a description of the craft skill written by his grandfather and it is clear from the variety and quantity of brooms made that these were much in demand. It may well have been that materials were sourced from the Forest, in addition to the Common, certainly there is mention of Lord Erskine of Holmbush and Buchan Hill selling the strongest heath to a broom maker in the early 18th century.³⁹ Groombridge also wrote that in early days each broom manufacturer would travel around visiting the large estates which had woodlands, these woodlands being cleared or coppiced every 15 years. A price was bid for so many acres, contract made, and it would be agreed that the buyer could enter the woodland, make his own roads in, set up camps, and light fires for the workers, cut and cart away the different types of wood for his needs until the woodland was exhausted. These materials would then be taken to a workshop for making into brooms of differing sizes and shapes.⁴⁰

As the 18th drew to a close, Horsham Town appeared to be a small thriving market town, with a good trade to London in grain, poultry and rabbits, and with a variety of tradesmen and manufacturers providing leather, beer, brooms, sacks and hats for the local populace through local shops, fairs and markets. There is limited evidence that St. Leonard's Forest was used as a commercial local resource, unlike the Wealden areas of Kent, as described by Thirsk who suggests that by the end of the 18th century in the

³⁸ Horsham Museum (HM), MS 323.

³⁹ British Library (BL), MS 40605, Peel Papers Vol. CCCCXXV 1807-May 1825 (hereafter Peel Papers).

⁴⁰ Groombridge, G. (2010) A Short History of Brooms, Broom-making and Broom-makers, *Horsham Heritage*, Issue No. 19, Autumn, Horsham Museum Society, pp. 44-55.

Weald of Kent, forest resources offered occupations of timber felling, carpentry, wood-turning, charcoal burning, iron smelting and cloth making.⁴¹ It is not clear how much industry was in St. Leonard's Forest, apart from the early iron industry, charcoal burning, broom making and perhaps early brick making. There was however the presence of a large and easily accessible Common nearby. The acreage of the Common at the turn of the century was estimated to be 689 acres with 58 acres already identified as encroached upon. The Common wrapped around the town from the north, butting up against the old boundary of the Borough of Horsham on its southern edge, up to the still existing Dog and Bacon public house, north through Little Haven and Roffey to the north east and then south coming near to St. Leonard's Forest at Compton Brow and Leachpool, ending at the Brighton Road to the south east of the town (see figure 4.3).

⁴¹ Thirsk, J. (1984) *The Rural Economy of England, collected essays*, London: The Hambledon Press, pp. 224-5.

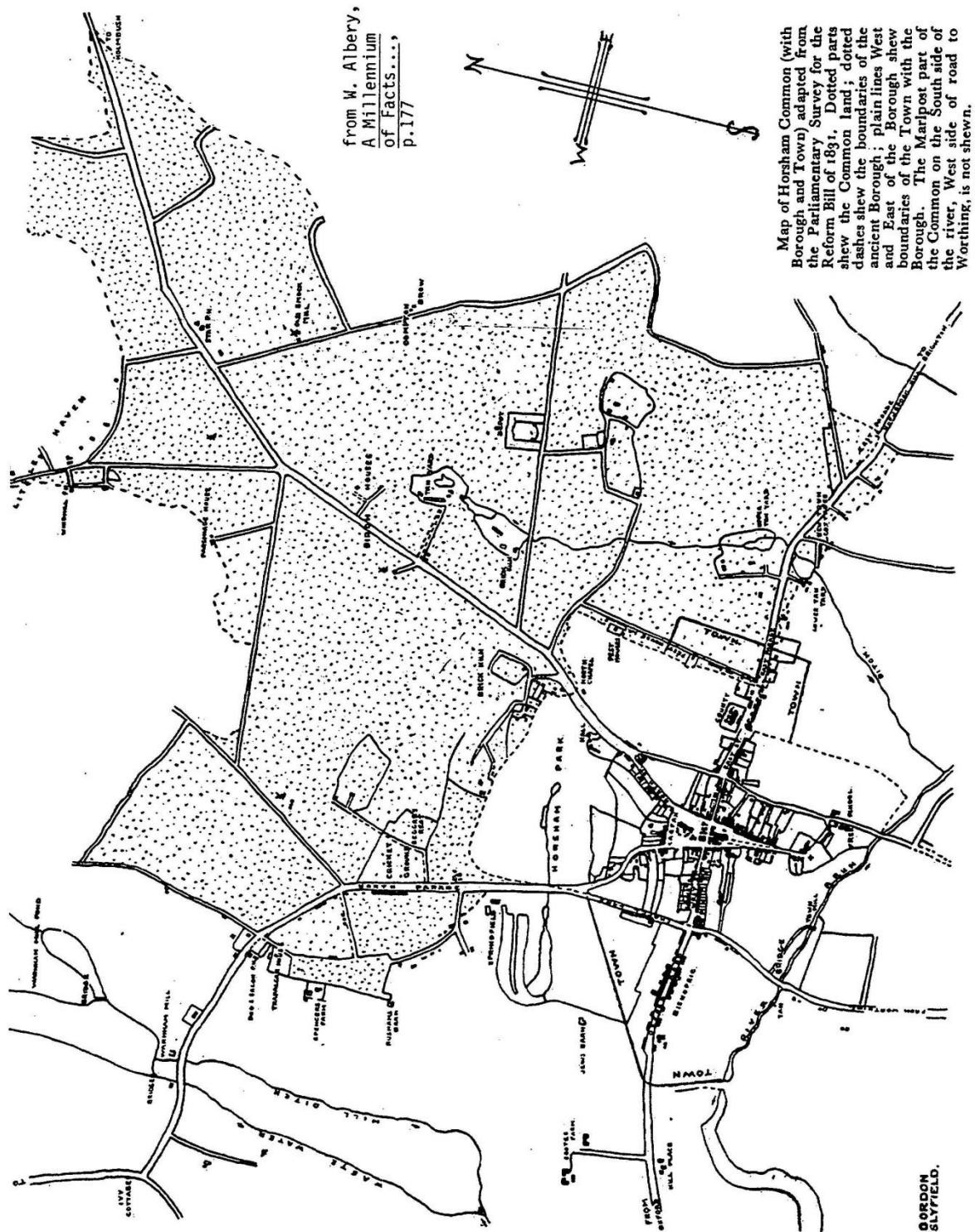


Figure 4.3: Copy of drawing by Gordon Slyfield of Albery's map of Horsham Common from Bowen. E.J. *The Enclosure of Horsham Common*, page 10

In his Horsham town history, published in 1947, William Albery, a solicitor, wrote that the legal rights over the Common were deeply rooted in the feudal Manorial and Burgage tenure system. The right of the soil of the Common lay with the Lord of the Manor, in this case the Duke of Norfolk, while the right of herbage and pannage lay with the burgesses, who were the legal owners, with their heirs, of ancient properties which made up the original 52 incorporators of the Borough. Although neither the Duke nor the burgesses could give freehold title to others to enclose areas of the Common, they could, and did, give leases for small enclosures, provided both were consulted and agreed.⁴² It is estimated that in the late 18th century 50 people had been granted leases with 11 extra parcels of land, with the suspicion that the Duke had not always consulted the burgesses before issuing leases. It should be stated that the public had always had free access over the Common, and there was no crime of trespass in passing over the Common. As noted, town events such as the St. Leonard's Fair were held on the Common after moving from the Forest itself. Sports such as bowling and cricket were held on the Common, and as the Napoleonic wars threatened volunteer soldiers drilled and camped on the Common, while condemned prisoners were taken from the County Gaol and hanged there to the entertainment of all.⁴³

Albery's map of the Common taken from the Parliamentary Survey for the Reform Bill in 1831 (see figure 4.3) also shows four windmills. Champion's Mill had been granted leases on the Common from 1765 when it was stated that it had recently been erected by John Champion on half an acre. Near to Champion's windmill was Dr. Lindfield's inoculation house where in 1774 John Baker, a solicitor living at Horsham Park House, had his servants inoculated against smallpox and they spent three weeks in isolation, with him bringing them warm punch and jelly to cheer them up. He was an unusual and kind employer, for although Horsham suffered from recurrent outbreaks of smallpox, the townspeople were very resistant to the idea of inoculation.⁴⁴ A Pest

⁴² Albery, 1947, 169-185.

⁴³ Bowen, E.J. (2007) *The Enclosure of Horsham Common*, Horsham Museum Society, pp. 12-15.

⁴⁴ Crook, D. (2006) *Defying the Demon, Smallpox in Sussex*, Lewes: Dale House Press, pp. 74-5.

House for the isolation of people with communicable diseases is in fact noted on Albery's map but at a little distance from Champion's Mill.

It can be concluded that the Common was a particularly useful area into which Horsham town could place its dirtier and smellier manufacturing, away from the growing population in the town. Although there were fears of robbery at night, the height and openness of the heath was ideal for windmills, and a healthy safe place for an isolation house. The Common also offered opportunities to a bold and determined individual to enclose a bit of land on which to build a house and establish a smallholding or business, albeit on an agreed lease. St. Leonard's Forest in contrast was largely in the hands of individual landowners, encroachments were unlikely, and as reported by Albery and Hurst, in the 18th century there were frightening stories of smugglers and robbers frequenting the Forest.⁴⁵

Albery told of the notorious Shipley gang, formed from members of the Rapley family who would meet at Gosden Mill in the south of the Forest to plan and deal with smuggled items.⁴⁶ Albery's accounts are now disputed as inaccurate and exaggerated with the Shipley gang appearing to be more petty thieves and burglars than smugglers.⁴⁷ However, Albery reported the reminiscences of a man, James Lindfield who lived as a boy at New Lodge, the Aldridge mansion in the middle of the Forest. Lindfield remembered often having to go to Burnt House in Cowfold for bottles of brandy, and once discovering 40 casks of spirit concealed in a hedge and covered in grass. He reported often having seen Thomas Walter, Excise Officer for Horsham with his own militia going through the Forest and out towards Pease Pottage. Yet another incident reported by Albery was that on 7th May 1792 a lone smuggler, with his horse loaded with four tubs of spirit, was found drowned in one of the hammer ponds,

⁴⁵ Albery, 1947, pp. 245-251 and Hurst, 1868, pp. 162-3.

⁴⁶ Albery, 1947, pp. 245-251.

⁴⁷ Wickens, C. (2001) *The Terror of the County – a history of the Shipley Gang, Horsham Heritage*, Issue No. 3, Spring, Horsham Museum Society, pp. 3-23.

presumably he had become lost, or stumbled into the pond on his way through the Forest.⁴⁸

Finally, Hurst, writing in the mid-19th century, reported that St. Leonard's Forest was a famous place for smugglers to rest between the coast and London. She wrote that Mr Aldridge, and one can assume she meant Robert Aldridge (1801-1871) remembered that when he was a boy it was a common occurrence for thirty to forty fully armed men to ride up the avenue to the house. Once in the house, suppers would be laid out for them, and fresh horses made available in the stables, which suggests some complicity and perhaps financial gain from the smuggling business. However, Hurst wrote that isolated unprotected houses had little choice but to comply, and indeed although Robert Aldridge's father, John Aldridge, had been a local Magistrate and a Captain in the Royal Sussex Militia he died in 1803, leaving the household particularly vulnerable to the smuggler gangs.⁴⁹

Perhaps the legends of the Forest also helped to keep the law-abiding people of Horsham out of the Forest and away from the smugglers and interference in their business as noted in the previous chapter. Another such legend, told by Hurst, was of Mike Mills,⁵⁰ a smuggler who lived in the Forest. The Devil was determined to carry off his soul and had had a few abortive attempts to do so. One dark night he confronted Mike with his contraband, Mike put down his tubs and challenged the Devil to a race, if he won then the Devil was to leave him alone. The Devil agreed and Mike raced away down the mile and a quarter pine tree lined avenue of Race Hill in the Forest, and outran the Devil by a quarter of a mile. The 1720 mortgage, itemised in chapter 3, names Michael Mills as occupying 600 acres of the Forest including New Lodge and Coolhurst. Was he a smuggler? This would have been before the occupation of the

⁴⁸ Albery, 1947, pp. 474-501.

⁴⁹ Hurst, 1868, pp. 161-8.

⁵⁰ Hurst refers to Mike Mills, the name however is more commonly known as Mick Mills as in Mick's Cross at the bottom of Race Hill on OS map TQ217302.

Aldridges, but maybe they carried on the business thus giving credence to Albery's reporting of James Lindfield's reminiscences of contraband in the Forest.⁵¹

Winslow writes that before 1740 there had been a Sussex custom amongst the wealthy, landowners and farmers of smuggling wool to avoid export tax, with the poor of Sussex considering it a legitimate part of the local economy. Only later, with the illegal import of tea and brandy and a much higher value, did the business turn particularly violent and was met by the full force of the militia and revenue officers. A two year campaign instigated by the Duke of Richmond in 1748 followed the brutal murder of Galley and Chater, a customs officer and informant. This resulted in 35 people hung after five trials, although as Winslow points out, many benefitted from smuggling but only the poor went to the gallows.⁵²

4.2: Society and Community

a) The middle classes, diarists and their leisure

By examining the diaries that survive from this period one can get an idea of how the Forest was viewed as a pleasant place to go for leisure away from the cares of work and family, although with the implied agreement of owners of forest land such as the Aldridges. There are two very different diaries from the 18th century that give a glimpse of life in and around Horsham and St. Leonard's Forest after 1750. Sarah Hurst wrote her diary from 1759 to 1762 about her daily life and aspirations. When Sarah wrote she was a young woman working in her father's drapery shop in Horsham and hoping to marry a soldier, Henry Smith, thirteen years her senior and serving with the Marine Corps against the French in Canada during the Seven Years War struggle for

⁵¹ Albery, 1947, pp. 474-501, and Hurst, 1868, pp. 162-8 and West Sussex Records Office (WSRO) ADD MS 32,961.

⁵² Winslow, C. (1975) *Sussex Smugglers*, Hay, D., Linebaugh, P., Thompson, E.P.(eds) *Albion's Fatal Tree, Crime and Society in Eighteenth-century England*, New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 119-166.

colonial dominance.⁵³ The second diary was written from 1750 to 1779 by John Baker, a Solicitor who moved to Horsham as a mature man. In considering how far and in what ways St. Leonard's Forest was used by the residents of Horsham, the diaries do give some clues for this section of society in that they used it for leisure, riding out and walking for their health and pleasure. It should be noted however, that unlike the Common where the public had free access across it, the Forest was private property and although footpaths and routes through were well marked and presumably well used (see figures 4.1 and 4.2) this would have been with the acquiescence of the landowners.

In June 1760 Sarah noted in her diary that she consulted the doctor for headaches and pain in her joints and he recommended exercise, so she rode out on horseback, and also went out in the 'chariot' sent to her by neighbour Mrs Tredcroft. She wrote of 'a pleasant ride in the Forest' and at another time 'ride out in the Forest, most delightfully pleasant'. In the July she was in better health and noted 'very busy in the shop all morning. Ride to the Hammer Pond in the afternoon with Sally Sheppard and her brother, Stringer. We drink tea there and then ramble about the Forest, such excursions as these are vastly agreeable at this delightful season'. There is little doubt that the Forest she refers to is St. Leonard's Forest, particularly with reference to the Hammer Pond. On a fine day in September 1760, she rode with her father to Slaugham, south east of the Forest, to visit the Rev. John Bristed, Rector of Slaugham from 1749 to 1783. Sarah wrote that they walked about the Forest and observed the beautiful scenes and admired the 'paradise' in which God had placed them, demonstrating that the natural Forest scenery was being enjoyed and used for leisure.⁵⁴

⁵³ Djabri, S.C. (ed.) (2009) *The Diaries of Sarah Hurst 1759-1762*, Stroud: Amberley Publishing, pp. 16-20, 50. Sarah Hurst's Diaries and their transcriptions by Barbara Hurst are held by Horsham Museum MSS 3542-3 and 3541. (hereafter Djabri, 2009).

⁵⁴ Djabri, 2009, pp. 150-3, 209-10.

Another clue as to how the Forest scenery was regarded comes from a letter written around the same time as Sarah was writing her diary entry, probably between 1758 and 1760 and by Elizabeth Ingram of Hills, Horsham, to her sister in law, Frances Ingram, later Lady Irwin, at Temple Newsam in Yorkshire. In the letter she wrote 'We have a forest near us that is beautiful without the help of art and where we go a airing thro' rides of two or three miles. Mr Wicker (of Park House, Horsham) has sent us a key of a part of the forest call'd Leech Poole that is beyond description pretty and full of stately oaks and ponds with the large and noble carp'.⁵⁵

Andrews writes that by the end of the 18th century natural scenery had become a valuable commodity, an amenity, and this had an impact on heathland and waste areas (such as St. Leonard's Forest) that had previously been seen as of little value.⁵⁶ In 1792 the Rev. William Gilpin wrote of two types of landscape, one round and smooth as in chalk downland, the other varied and wooded, such as the Weald, he praised this latter type as aesthetically pleasing and desirable. The French and Napoleonic Wars had brought an end to the grand tours of Italy and the continent of Europe which had been such an essential part of a wealthy education with the development of an appreciation of picturesque landscape, that which was rocky, wooded and well composed as if by art. The upper classes now turned to British landscapes for education in aesthetic appreciation and found it, amongst other places in the Lake District and the Weald, comparing the views with many in Italy. This also began to bring within the sphere of the growing middle classes the opportunity to attain and develop 'picturesque estates', thus demonstrating their own good taste and growing affluence.⁵⁷

John Baker was a wealthy man through a well-judged marriage and his professional work as a solicitor. In 1771 he came to live at Park House in Horsham, a large mansion previously owned by John Wicker, with parkland on the edge of town and land on the

⁵⁵ Djabri, S.C. (ed.) (2002) *A Little News from Horsham, Some 18th century letters from Hills*, Horsham: Museum Society, pp. 34-5 (Hereafter Djabri, 2002) and HM, MS 792.2.

⁵⁶ Andrews, M. (1999) *Landscape and Western Art*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 55-75.

⁵⁷ Brandon, 2010, pp. 23-36.

east of the Forest called Leechpool. It is from that date that his diaries illuminate 18th century life in Horsham for the minor gentry. Within a mile or two of Park House were his neighbours, small Sussex landed gentry such as the Shelleys, Tredcrofts, Eversfields, Aldridges and Blunts. He wrote in a mixture of English, Latin and French, and from extracts published by his descendant, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt in 1909, one can see how time was passed for this class. Blunt is quite critical of the lifestyle saying 'it shows the very material life led by the Sussex gentry of the day, the limited interest taken by them in public affairs, and the trifling nature of their amusements...neither hunting or shooting being seriously pursued...contented themselves with heavy eating and drinking, much card playing and occasional entertainments at the Horsham public rooms'. W. S. Blunt (1840-1922) in contrast was not only an energetic hedonist and poet but achieved much in his lifetime, as did his wife, Byron's granddaughter Lady Anne. She learnt Arabic, published travel books, established an internationally renowned stud of Arabian horses at Crabbet Park, Crawley, while he entered politics after travelling widely in the diplomatic service, promoted anti-imperialism and supported Egypt, India and Ireland in their efforts for independence, so a very active couple with wider horizons than Blunt's ancestor, John Baker.⁵⁸

John Baker passed his time by visiting friends, drinking and eating with them, listening to music, attending fairs and shooting, and watching a lot of cricket on the Common before its enclosure. Like Sarah Hurst he wrote of riding in the Forest, although not so often as her. He noted that he had walked in the Forest and that his family have ridden in the Forest and met their coach at the Aldridge's. With regard to his friend's houses and gardens he showed some interest in garden design. When visiting John Shelley's estate at Field Place, Warnham, he described two swans on the water, thickets and fields of wheat, a large pleasant level field at the end of a thicket with a fine smooth green walk. John Shelley had created an early American garden at Field Place, possibly for his mother who was born in New Jersey.⁵⁹ American gardens began to appear in

⁵⁸ Blunt, W.S. (1909) Extracts from Mr John Baker's Horsham Diary, *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, Vol. 52, pp. 38-82, and Oxford Dictionary of National Biography entry for Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen and Blunt (née King) Anne Isabella Noel, accessible through www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk.

⁵⁹ Pers. Comm. Djabri 13.5.2012.

the late 18th century and were simply areas in the garden given over to the new plant and tree introductions from North America and Canada such as rhododendrons. In June 1773, Baker diarised that while drinking tea with Lady Irwin he found out that Lancelot 'Capability' Brown was at their home, Hills Place, to oversee his landscaping of the parkland which included widening the river Arun and creating ponds and cascades. Such a venture not only provided the status of a modern and expensive setting in which to socialise, but it underlined the move from formal gardens to a more confident picturesque style of parkscape with vistas on the grand scale.⁶⁰

A welcome mark of status for the Aldridges must have been a visit from the artist John Claude Nattes on 30 August 1784 in the company of W. Blunt. He completed a pencil sketch of New Lodge, erected by John Clater Aldridge, probably about 10 or 20 years earlier, which showed a small Georgian style mansion surrounded by pine and deciduous trees with small gate posts and drive. It does look like a house in a forest but detail is limited and it would have been good to see an illustration of the garden as the only evidence that there was a formal design lies in the Gardner and Gream map of 1795 (see figure 4.1).⁶¹ Three years later in 1787 another artist, S.H. Grimm, produced a range of Sussex drawings and within this portfolio is a tinted drawing of New Lodge, somewhat similar to the Nattes drawing it showed a small Georgian stone mansion, decorative garden fence and views to the east (see figure 4.4).⁶²

By the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century, a qualitative change in labour relations was underway, the labourer was becoming more independent and able to choose his work and employer. Commercialisation and the dominance of money payments were becoming the norm, or as Thompson writes 'economic

⁶⁰ Mowl, T. (2000) *Gentlemen and Players, Gardeners of the English Landscape*, Stroud: Sutton Publishing, pp. 149-162, (hereafter Mowl, 2000).

⁶¹ The sketch of New Lodge by Nattes resides in the collection of H.M. The Queen, and was on loan to Horsham Museum for the 2011 exhibition entitled 'Forgotten Views of Georgian Sussex: The Drawings of John Claude Nattes'.

⁶² BL, Add MS 5673, f68, image 123.

rationalisation had long been nibbling through the bonds of paternalism'.⁶³

Nevertheless, old-fashioned paternalism still survived at this period of time, not only on the management of estates, as Horn suggests, citing that of Lord Egremont at Petworth, but in attitudes and largesse, for which there is the example of the Aldridges of New Lodge in the Forest.⁶⁴



Figure 4.4: Reproduction of drawing by S.H. Grimm of New Lodge House, about 1787 from BL Add MS 5673 folio 68, image 123.

The occasion for this largesse, as reported in *The Morning Post* at the time, was the celebrations for the coming of age of the young Robert Aldridge. His mother, Anna Maria Aldridge bore two sons, the first died in his first year 1801 and then Robert was born the same year, and it is noted in the newspaper report that for many years he was of such delicate health that he was hardly expected to reach the age of 21. An

⁶³ Thompson, 1993, p.38-9.

⁶⁴ Horn, P. (1980) *The Rural World 1780 – 1850*, London: Hutchinson and Co. (Publishers) Ltd., pp. 13-35.

additional reason for celebration of this birthday was that Anna Maria was widowed when Robert was two, and so this was an end to her guardianship of the estate.⁶⁵

The celebrations began on Monday 24 June 1822 with peals of Horsham town bells and the town band walking before daylight out to the Forest and New Lodge to rouse the family and their visitors with 'cheerful and patriotic airs', as this was midsummer it must have been very early in the morning. Visitors arrived throughout the day and included most of the 'rank and fashion of the county'. *The Morning Post* reported that nearly 300 people 'formed a display of elegance and beauty seldom equalled, assembled in a temporary ball-room' presumably some sort of marquee on the lawn. The Sussex regiment military band played and from London came 'Collinets's celebrated Quadrille players' to lead the dancing. Cooks from London and Brighton provided the finest meal in another temporary room decorated with plants and flowers. Dancing continued into the late hours of the morning. The next day another party was held for 500 people consisting of the poor of the neighbourhood; however, status was not forgotten as the newspaper report tells that superior tables were provided for tenants of the Aldridges and respectable tradesmen who then presided as carvers for the inferior tables. A Baron of Beef surmounted by the royal standard was ushered in by the Horsham Band playing 'The Roast Beef of Old England' and a copious supply of ale crowned the feast. The Sunday school children were given cake and ale, and games took over the afternoon until fireworks concluded the event (see figure 4.5). Another ball and supper was prepared for the following Thursday for the 'respectable tenants and tradesmen to be given in the supper rooms'.⁶⁶

By any standard this does appear to have been a particularly generous sharing of a family celebration with Horsham town and employees on the estate, although class status was clearly maintained. Anna Maria Aldridge was only to live another three years and died in Paris on 25 June 1825 so that she did not see her son, Robert, marry

⁶⁵ *The Morning Post* (London, Eng.) Tuesday July 02 1822 Issue 16005.

⁶⁶ A 'baron' of beef was a very large double Sirloin joint of roast beef.

Donkey Racing
AND OTHER AMUSEMENTS

New Lodge St. Leonard's

on Tuesday the 25th June 1822,

To Start at Five

A MATCH FOR *Three Guineas*

BETWEEN

Mr. Aldridge's Frolic, 6 years old – Colour Blue

Mr. J. Erskine's Lady Jane, 4 years old ditto Pink

START AT HALF PAST FIVE

FOR A HAT

Mr. W.B. Smith's Whiz Gig, - Colour Green

Mr. D. Erskine's Moses, - ditto Red.

Mr. Aldridge's Frolic, - ditto Blue,

Mr. J. Erskine's Lady Jane, - ditto Pink

START AT SIX

FOR A BRIDLE

Take Notice, Persons wishing their Donkeys to start, must have their names entered at the Crown Inn, on or before six o'Clock on Monday evening, or at the Starting Post at four o'Clock on Tuesday with the Names and Colours of the Riders.

Chemise to be run for by Ladies

A Soaped tail Pig

Jumping in a Sack for a pair of Shoes.

CLIMING A POLE FOR HATS AND BLUE RIBBONS

BOBBING MATCH FOR PAIR OF WHITE STOCKINGS

Driving a Wheelbarrow Blindfolded for a Silk Handkerchief

Jingling Match for a Round Frock

Women to Walk Blindfolded for a Gown and Jingling Match for
Caps and Blue Ribbons

Eating Rolls and Treacle for a Hat

Young gentlemen cannot be admitted as Candidates whose mouths exceed Seven
Inches and One-Quarter

Dipping for Money in a Flour Tub

Walking the Bowsprit,

Grigg's Mare to be shod for a Silk Handkerchief,

FOR HAT AND WHITE STOCKINGS

Ladies and Gentlemen Candidates for the above Prizes need be under no apprehension of hurting themselves in the event of a Fall there being a sufficiency of Mud in the Pond to prevent any unpleasant consequences,

The Sports commence at Five o'Clock precisely,

Phillips, Printer, Horsham

Figure 4.5: Copy of poster announcing the second day's celebrations for Robert Aldridge's 21st Birthday, with permission of Mrs S. Djabri, in private collection.

his near neighbour, Caroline Anne Beauclerk, eldest daughter of Charles George Beauclerk of St. Leonard's Lodge and granddaughter of the Duchess of Leinster, at Cowfold on 20 October 1829.⁶⁷

b) Religion, morality and population

An important impact on the Forest, and in particular the formation of the two villages within the Forest, was that of the drive to build churches in what was seen as an ungodly Forest area. Hurst refers to the Forest as a 'country so wild and lawless' that it was no surprise to her that superstitions and legends were rife.⁶⁸ The antiquarian, Rev. J.R. Bloxam, who was the friend and companion of Cardinal Newman and a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, was also vicar of Upper Beeding from 1862 to 1891. He collected letters, documents, and made notes of relevance to his large parish, and these archives are now held by Magdalen College, Oxford. Research of this archive shows that the clergy from the surrounding parishes of Horsham and Rusper, Cowfold, Nuthurst and Ifield felt compelled to take action to 'civilise' the wilder populace of the Forest, and so in the early 1820s they sent a letter signed by them all to the President and Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford. It was noted in the previous chapter that on the demise of Sele Priory in 1459, its property was transferred to Magdalen College, newly founded by William of Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester, thus Magdalen College became responsible for the religious life of Lower Beeding, including St. Leonard's Forest. Hence the concerned clergy of the northern part of Beeding, without a parish church, wrote to Magdalen College outlining the pressures of a growing population in the area of 'Upper Beeding' which they said now contained above 400 inhabitants.

Lower Beeding was part of the ecclesiastical parish of Upper Beeding, although separated by eight or nine miles. However, for civil purposes such as poor law

⁶⁷ *The Morning Post* (London, Eng.) Tuesday July 02 1822 Issue 16005, and also Wednesday July 06 Issue 17018 and Friday October 23 Issue 18366 for death and marriage respectively.

⁶⁸ Hurst, 1868, p. 162.

administration, land tax and census, it was a civil parish in its own right until 1838, when it became an ecclesiastical parish with parish church. The area of Lower Beeding was virtually co-terminus with the core area of St. Leonard's Forest and so any statistics on Lower Beeding are relevant to the Forest. In the West Sussex Land Tax records of 1785, it is stated that in the Land Tax administrative area of Lower Beeding, an area of 10,152 acres which was more or less the area of the Forest, there were 12 landowners and 10 different occupiers, although sadly the lands owned and occupied are not noted, and of course the poor and landless are not included.⁶⁹

The first census of 1801 was purely a counting exercise of the people actually resident in a particular place at a particular time, so there is not the extra detail of later census. However, the Table of Population extracted from census data and published in *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex* as a comparative table shows the civil parish of Lower Beeding as having an acreage of 10,152 and populations of 230 in 1801, 274 in 1811, and 405 in 1821 making a population increase since 1801 of 76% which makes sense of the concerns of the clergy who were writing in the early 1820s. It is interesting that Upper Beeding showed a decrease over the same time from 495 in 1801 to 443 in 1811 and a slight increase to 499 in 1821, so the clergy although writing about Upper Beeding in their first letter, must have meant the upper or northern part of Beeding, i.e. Lower Beeding which did show a large increase in population to over 400. From the same census data the further abstract of answers and returns shows that ten years later in 1831 there were 90 houses in Lower Beeding housing 97 families, 80 of these families were engaged in agriculture, 14 in trade, manufacture and handicraft and three in other activities. Of the total population in Lower Beeding of 533 in 1831 there were 261 men and 272 women. A rough and ready calculation therefore gives an average family size of 5.5 people, not large at this period of time.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Readman, A., Falconer, L., Ritchie, R. and Wilkinson, P. (2000) *West Sussex Land Tax 1785*, Lewes: Sussex Record Society, **82**, p. 49.

⁷⁰ Page, W. (ed.) (1973) Social and Economic History, Table of Population, 1801 to 1901, *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex*, Vol. II, The Institute of Historical Research by University of London, pp. 215-228 (hereafter VCH, II).

In the first letter of the early 1820s, the local clergy pointed to an influx of settlers who were forced to travel to the outlying parish churches for marriage, baptism and burial, not only an inconvenience for those people but an added burden for the clergy ministering to them. However, the clergy felt that these problems ‘sink into utter insignificance when compared with the frightful moral evils necessarily attendant on the state in which they are left. These wretched people have neither Pastor nor Church’. They also note that many of the inhabitants are not known to the few resident gentry, thus appeared to be even further from a good moral compass. They end their letter by restating that the people in this unfortunate district ‘are notorious for their disorderly and profligate conduct and it is the resort of the idle and worthless from the surrounding neighbourhood’. They fear the morals of their own parishioners may be contaminated by this unruly lot, and hope that some measure could be taken to provide the unfortunate inhabitants with the blessings of a ‘resident Pastor, regular religious instruction, without which they will be making daily advance in disorder and depravity’. There was in this last sentence some sense of urgency and real concern.⁷¹

The Rev. H. J. Rose, Vicar of Horsham and Rusper, wrote a letter in his own right dated September 25th 1822 to the President and Fellows of Magdalen College which focused on the Forest area which he said was a deplorable case. He cited that the people were either dissenters or of no worship at all ‘for they inhabit the wild and unfrequented part of St. Leonard’s Forest, their habits are peculiarly lawless and need peculiar pains and attention’ and he wished to remedy these “crying evils”. The Rev. Rose suggested that the land where the Barracks had been built and dismantled could be used to build a church to take ‘the spiritual charge of the forest part of Beeding’ and he suggested that he began to obtain subscriptions for such a church. This letter and the previous from the local clergy, appeared to set in train negotiations over tithes, land and church which was ultimately to lead to the withdrawal of Magdalen College, Oxford from the spiritual responsibility and collection of tithes, and to the building of three churches,

⁷¹ Magdalen College, Oxford, MS741.1.

the creation of the Parish of Lower Beeding in 1838 and the Consolidated Chapelry of Saint Saviour, Colgate in 1871.⁷²

There is limited additional evidence for the moral state of the population in Lower Beeding and what gave rise to such concern; however a glimpse is given by the First Report of the Commissioners into the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture 1867-8. It shows that on November 7th 1867, in a meeting at Horsham with representatives from Horsham, Nuthurst and Lower Beeding parishes, it was reported that 'In 1800, 3000 acres of St. Leonard's Forest, in the centre of the parish (which was then a rabbit warren) was let on 100 year lease, and several cottages, turf huts, were allowed to be run up by the lessee, of a very inferior condition, which were let with an acre of land at £1 a year. About a dozen of these cottages still remain in their original condition, about half of which are occupied by Irish families'. This may go some way to explain the sudden increase in population in Lower Beeding, and the fact that many were Irish Catholic which may have caused anxiety to the protestant clergy, who were also under pressure from the increase in dissenters.⁷³

Lower Beeding women certainly appeared to be assertive in expressing their anger with regard to government interference with their food. Thompson quotes from the *Reading Mercury*, 9 February 1801, although Griffin wrote that the story first appeared in the *Sussex Weekly Advertiser*. A number of women, unhappy with the new 1800 Brown Bread Act (repealed in 1801) which required millers to make only wholemeal bread, descended on Gosden Mill in the south of the Forest, abused the miller for selling them brown flour and seized the cloth he was using which they then cut into a thousand pieces, threatening to do the same with other tools of his trade. The report then said that 'The Amazonian leader of this petticoated cavalcade afterwards regaled her associates with a guinea's worth of liquor at the Crab Tree public-house'. This

⁷² Magdalen, MS741.2.

⁷³ Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture, 1867, First Report (P.P. 1867-8, **XVII**), pp. 81-2. (hereafter P.P. 1867-8, **XVII**).

event gives an indication that the poor of the Forest were not content with their situation but equally not afraid to do something about it. One can indeed imagine some rather nervous clergy reflecting on this local popular protest, led by women, behaving independently and in a manner at odds with the expectations of the clergy and gentry.⁷⁴

A hidden population which is not easy to trace is that of the travellers and gypsies who would have frequented the Forest, more so after the commons was enclosed in the early 19th century. Ellis quotes in part from Murray's *Hand Book of Kent and Sussex* that:

‘the forest was much resorted to by tramps and gipsies who could easily knock down a rabbit or hare, and kindle a fire to make the pot boil, and living within its precincts for weeks together, “lose and neglect the creeping hours of time”, not knowing, as I have been assured, the day of the week or of the month.’⁷⁵

This type of lifestyle would presumably have concerned the clergy as not conforming to the morality of the day or protestant work ethic. Bovill wrote that the gypsies suffered particularly from the enclosure of the commons as these were their principal homes, living wholly in tents, and it was the loss of their traditional camping grounds that led them to adopt caravans at the end of the 19th century.⁷⁶

c) Forest estates, game and sport

The ownership of estates within the core Forest area determined how the landscape of the Forest was managed and shaped. The perception of the Aldridges towards their poor value heathland Forest estate led to large scale leasing and subleasing, producing small farms and poor domestic buildings, whilst Holmbush owned by Lord Erskine and

⁷⁴ Thompson, 1993, pp. 192-3, and Griffin, C. J. (2014) *Protest, Politics and Work in Rural England, 1700 – 1850*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 106, 203.

⁷⁵ Ellis, W.S. (1925) *The Parks and Forests of Sussex, Ancient and Modern*, Lewes: H. Wolff., p 176, footnote 111 (hereafter Ellis, 1925).

⁷⁶ Bovill, E.W. (1962) *English Country Life 1780-1830*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 26 (hereafter Bovill, 1962).

later Thomas Broadwood developed as a sporting estate. The ownership of these estates was therefore crucial to the changes that the landscape would undergo from the 18th to the 19th century.

The First Report of the Commissioners into the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture, 1867-8, noted that Lower Beeding was a wide scattered parish of 10,000 acres, sparsely populated with 4000 acres of uncultivated land and woodland with three main landowners. They do not mention who these landowners were, but reference to both Cartwright and Horsfield, who published in 1830 and 1835 respectively, also refer to three main landowners, Robert Aldridge, Lord Erskine and Charles George Beauclerk.⁷⁷

To reprise, St. Leonard's Forest, which in total Cartwright and Horsfield estimated to be between 8000 and 9000 acres, had as its main proprietor Robert Aldridge of New Lodge, alternatively known as St. Leonard's House or just St. Leonard's Forest, of which he possessed about 3400 acres in the centre. The estate had been inherited by his grandfather, John Clater Aldridge, in about 1760, who had added to the estate through the purchase of various farms and land which had subsequently been leased out by his father, John Aldridge, the younger, before he died in 1803. Reference to the leasing of large parts of the estate was made in the Report into the Employment in Agriculture, 1867-8. Edward M. Bigg, Chairman of the Horsham meeting wrote in this report that cottages and turf huts of a very inferior condition were allowed to be run up by the Aldridge estate lessees.⁷⁸

Initially, part of this estate land was leased to Marcus Dixon in 1792 as the *Oracle and Daily Advertiser* of June 29th 1799 carried an advert by order of his executors for the

⁷⁷ Cartwright, E. (1830) *The Parochial Topography in the Western Division of the County of Sussex* London: J.B. Nichols and son, pp. 364-5, (hereafter Cartwright, 1830) and Horsfield, T.W. (1835) *The History, Antiquities and Topography of the County of Sussex*, Vol. 2, Lewes, Sussex Press, p 222 (hereafter Horsfield, 1835) and P.P. 1867-8, **XVII**.

⁷⁸ P.P. 1867-8, **XVII**, and Cartwright, 1830, and Horsfield, 1835.

sale of the unexpired term of 21 years of an improved leasehold estate comprising St. Leonard's Forest of 3000 acres, newly erected genteel dwelling house, offices, farm buildings and yard, with warren houses and conveniences. It then itemised rights over timber, quarries, mines, brick kiln, and conies, continuing to describe the premises as forming three extensive warrens, capable of producing 1200 dozen conies per year, about 30 acres being enclosed. To get an idea of the value of the conies there is a lease from 1763, referring to a warren at Tilgate, part of Worth Forest, which gives the price of seven or eight shillings for a dozen conies to the poulterers in London, with a possible increase to nine shillings which would trigger an increase in rental.⁷⁹ Thus the value of the conies from this St. Leonard's Forest estate could be more than £420-480 per annum. The advertisement emphasised that very considerable money had already been recently spent on new buildings and improvements, but that this along with the timber, wood and stock of conies would be included without further valuation.⁸⁰

A new 'head lease' made on 10th January, 1801 by John Aldridge, the younger, subsequently leased this same land to George Railton and William Hulls identifying those parts of St. Leonard's Forest known as Great Warren and Plummers Plain Warren containing 3000 acres for a term of 100 years. Aldridge reserved for himself the right to the fish in Hammer Pond and French Bridge Pond, rights of way over land to the south of the ponds, the right to stone from the quarry on Barnsnap Hill and sporting rights, except for rabbits and conies. Rent, to be paid at New Lodge, was £450 per annum. The original head lease, the conditions of which all subletting adhered to, allowed for tenants to have the buildings, quarries, mines, underwood, timber, pits, royalties, tithes, privileges and appurtenances, together with rights to kill rabbits and conies and fell timber, grub up and make coal (charcoal), plough and convert to tillage, make ponds, and even build manufactories, provided nothing dangerous to fish or cattle was allowed to pass into streams which ran into the ponds. Subleasing continued with the ability to plough up land and convert into smaller agricultural plots, but it is not clear who sublet the numerous acres for £1 a year and put up shoddy

⁷⁹ WSRO, Add Mss 17089.

⁸⁰ *Oracle and Daily Advertiser* (London) Saturday, June 29 1799, Issue 22023.

cottages as indicated by Edward M. Bigg in the First Report of the Commissioners into the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture, 1867-8.⁸¹

In August of 1801 an area of 1950 acres was sublet by Railton and Hulls to James Duewick which included Carter's Lodge and part of the Great Warren abutting on the south the Horsham-Brighton road and across Plummers Plain, the term was 99 years and cost £310 per annum. A year later Duewick subleased to John Watling, the same area minus 68 acres to John Ridley, for a term of 98 years for a rent of £441. 15. 0 per annum, thereby making a profit on this arrangement.⁸² A subsequent subletting in 1807 was made to Mr. Coddington Worthy and then the following year he sold the lease of the Barn, stable, outhouses, land of nearly 500 acres and other premises to John Walker, who was a friend and trustee of Helena Bennett. There followed legal documents to confirm that the £150 paid was in fact Helena Bennett's money and John Walker used it solely for her benefit. In 1819 it was further legally acknowledged that the property, Rangers Lodge, at Great Ground, was transferred to Helena Bennett.

Helena Bennett was born in Lucknow, India, of Persian descent and was married when young to a French soldier, Benoît de Boigne. She and her two children were abandoned by him in London when he remarried a young French heiress; she moved to St. Leonard's Forest after the death of their 15 year old daughter. Although she had a son, he was at boarding school in Hertfordshire, and spent little time with his mother, eventually joining his father in France. She lived quietly in the Forest and was known as the Black Princess until her death in 1853. Her sad life story apparently inspired the locally born poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, to begin writing a verse drama based on an Indian enchantress abandoned by her lover, although it was never finished. He wrote 'He came like a dream in the dawn of life, He fled like a shadow

⁸¹ HM, McGaw archive, MS 3142

⁸² HM, McGaw archive, MSS 3142, 3117, 3118.1.

before its noon, He is gone, and my peace is turned to strife, And I wander and wane like the weary moon'.⁸³

The Land Tax records, those that are available, shed further light on ownership and leaseholders. When introduced in 1692 this tax was based on acreage, but from 1776 it was assessed on the annual rental value and levied at four shillings in the pound, later raised to five pounds. It was assessed and collected locally by parish and appears to have been waived or exonerated at the discretion of the assessors, who often owned the land being assessed. In June 1806 the proprietor, Mrs Maria Aldridge was assessed for £300 and the sum of tax levied was £60, or £5 in the pound. Apart from her, there were ten occupiers named, although unfortunately the properties they occupied were not noted. Those ten were George Railton, William Charman, Edward Handman, Charles Chad, Joseph Twillard, John Turner, Rich Tester, Charles Bartlett, Robert Johnson and Widow Howe. The tax document showed that the two assessors and collectors were Joseph and James Twillard and it was signed by Thomas Jameson, B. Shelley and N. Tredcroft, themselves local landowners.⁸⁴

The reason that the Aldridge family were keen to sell and lease their land becomes clear in reading a Trust set up by John Clater Aldridge in 1790, followed by an Act of Parliament dated 1802 which enabled the Trustees of the St. Leonard's Forest estate to complete the arranged sale of the southern portion of the estate to Charles George Beauclerk. John Clater Aldridge, the elder (1737-1795), having inherited the estate, expanded it and built a mansion, New Lodge, then five years before his death in 1790 settled the whole St. Leonard's Forest estate in the hands of three family trustees, his son John Aldridge, the younger (1767-1803), his wife's family member, William Busby, and his brother-in-law, John Warburton. All three were responsible for agreeing and arranging for provision of family members with annuities. There were to be two annuities of £50 to his sisters for life, two of £100 for his wife and brother, and another

⁸³ From the exhibition at Horsham Museum, 'The Black Lady of St. Leonard's Forest – The Life and Times of Horsham's Persian Princess' 1.10.10-30.10.10.

⁸⁴ HM, MSS X2001, 2498

two of £50 for his other two children for life. A split Trust was set up for Henrietta Carter, his daughter and widow of Edward Carter, and his married youngest daughter, Louisa, both to have rights of tenants in common which secured their homes for life. The remainder of the money was to pass down the family, son first then daughter, with the eldest son inheriting the mansion. The Trustees were instructed to sell and disperse all or any part or parcel of the Manor and Forest for a reasonable price, and to either invest it in purchasing another more productive estate, or in stocks and shares, in order to provide the arranged annuities.⁸⁵

Readers of Dickens and Austen will be aware of what a desirable benefit an annuity was to single women in the 19th century, and so those of the Aldridge family would have been grateful to John Aldridge the elder for providing for them in this way. Thus the estate was used as an income generator through sale and lease of land alone, rather than a productive asset in its own right. The reasoning is made clear in the passage of the 1802 Act in regard to the sale of the southern portion of the Forest to Charles Beauclerk. It points out that the part of the Forest to be sold had never been cultivated, and a considerable portion of it was covered with heath, so that 'it would require the expenditure of a considerable sum of money, and great attention to make it productive, neither of which could possibly be bestowed upon it, by or on behalf of the infant Robert Aldridge'. Whereas the sale contract sum of £19,543-8-4 could be put towards the 'purchase of other more cultivated estates which would be much more productive' but until such purchase could be found it was suggested that the sum could be invested in Navy, Victualing or Exchange Bills. So the land itself was felt to be a wasteland, and too expensive to invest in, alternatively, by raising cash by sale or lease and investing the cash for an income, the whole family immediately benefitted.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ HM MSS 3268, 3269.1, 3269.2, and 1802, An Act for the Enabling the Trustees of the settled Estates late of John Aldridge, Esq, deceased, to carry into execution a contract entered into with Charles Beauclerk for the sale of part, 1802, Private Bills 1727 – 1814, Vol. 2, pp. 1 -18. Accessible through: ProQuest House of Commons Parliamentary Papers (hereafter Private Bills 1727 – 1814, Vol. 2, pp. 1 -18.).

⁸⁶ Private Bills 1727 – 1814, Vol. 2, pp. 1 -18.

John Aldridge the younger had already arranged to raise a mortgage of £3000 on some of the estate and agreed to sell 670 acres plus an additional 325 acres to Charles Beauclerk, the conveyance was drawn up and due to be executed on 11 April 1803 but John Aldridge died suddenly at Brighton on 7 April 1803. This premature death of the main trustee must have caused considerable distress and consternation in the remaining Aldridge family, and it appears that the only course of action open to the remaining two trustees was to arrange for an Act of Parliament to enable this sale to precede, in the interests of John Aldridge's widow and infant, Robert Aldridge.⁸⁷

The land subsequently sold to Beauclerk, later to be known as Leonardslee, was identified as the 670 acres to the south of St. Leonard's Forest which lay east of the turnpike road leading from Cowfold to Hand Cross, beginning at the gate near the Crab Tree public house and extending to the Brick Kilns on Plummers Plain. A valuation attached as Schedule A to the Act valued the land itself at £5836-5-0 in July 1790 when the Trust was being set up, the timber, tellers and saplings at £7380-0-4 and the underwoods at £3359-10-0. Further Schedules B and C made clear the variety and quantity of trees. On the 670 acres were 1564 Beech trees, 30 Oak trees, and on the 300 acres 98 Beech and 34 Oak. On the 25 acres of Stonewick coppice near Slaugham only 4 trees were identified as Beech and Ash but 46 tons of Oak at £4 per ton were identified which appeared to be an oak coppice of 136 trees. It is useful to note that this valuation showed that the Forest consisted of barely three timber trees an acre for the 670 acres, and nearer two for the 300 acres. The sale of the 300 acres west of the turnpike made sense as it separated the 670 acres from a farm that Charles Beauclerk already owned, and the 25 acres of Stonewick Coppice was later agreed for sale. The whole valuation came to £22,543-8-4 and included an extra £900 that Beauclerk agreed to pay, presumably for inflation since the valuation originally took place. In retrospect, this all seems like selling the family silver, but the annuities had to be paid and no doubt the women of the family who all married were very grateful.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Private Bills 1727 – 1814, Vol. 2, pp. 1 -18., and Coomber, 1931, p.10.

⁸⁸ HM MSS 3269.1 and 3269.2 and Private Bills 1727 – 1814, Vol. 2, pp. 1 -18..

To the north of the Forest lay Lord Erskine's estate. Elwes noted that this was purchased by him in 1786 from John Baird having passed through a number of hands since the 17th century. He cited Philip, Earl of Arundel and then Arthur Middleton. From him, he wrote, it was granted to Edward Wortley Montagu, who left it to the Hon. James Archibald Stuart, who sold it in 1786 to John Baird who quickly sold it on to Lord Erskine the same year. However, in the Burrell archive of Sussex Collections there is a printed notice advertising that Holmbush was to be sold by auction on 11 July 1787. The estate of 2736 acres was divided into 5 lots. First, there was Little Bewbush and Hopper Farms, including a rabbit warren of 1597 acres and warreners houses. Next was Great Bewbush Farm with a good house and offices, in 224 acres. Kilnwood Farm with a new and substantial brick house and 173 acres, the next was Pondsides Farm, only 30 acres with house and farm buildings. The final lot was Holmbush House, with coach house, stable, gardens, pleasure grounds, paddocks adorned with clumps of shrubs and land of 157 acres with farm house and sporting rights over the whole estate, including fishing, which provided £125 per annum and an extra £37 from 74 acres of woodland. It was noted that the estate abounded with game and the lake and ponds were well stocked with fish. The purchaser was to pay for the timber, underwood, farming stock and growing crops, and mention was made of the stock of rabbits amounting to 12,000 and valued at about £500. The extensive estate was said to be 'perfectly in a ring fence, very healthful and beautifully situate[d]' and this is what Lord Erskine bought, either in 1786 or 1787.⁸⁹

Lord Erskine took great interest in the improvement of the estate and built for himself a mansion called Buchan Hill, named after a family title, on the eastern side of the estate. Elwes confirms that there was an older house, probably the eight-bedroomed, low roomed house on the western side of the estate near to where Thomas Broadwood subsequently built his mansion called Holmbush in 1826.⁹⁰ Burke noted that also near this site was the 'spot where the fire-beacon was erected during the last

⁸⁹ BL Add MS 5685, pp 28-9, Burrell's Sussex Collections, Bramber Rape.

⁹⁰ Elwes, 1879, pp. 27-8.

war, nearly five hundred feet above the level of the sea'. Writing in 1852 Burke was referring to the beacons set up during the Napoleonic wars.⁹¹

It appears that the whole Holmbush estate was not purchased in its entirety in 1786/7. A mortgage for £15,000 was raised on the estate by Lord Erskine in 1815 which identifies certain properties within the manors or lordships of Holme Bush and Shelley such as the mansion house, offices, gardens, paddock and lands of Holme Bush Farm, Great Bew Bush Farm, Little Bew Bush Farm, Hopper Farm, Lodge House and warren, Shelley Farm and warren, Sibbalds Field Farm and warren, Pond Side Farm, which it notes were all purchased from the heirs of William Manners in 1807 for £25,000. The mortgage deed also identifies other properties held by Lord Erskine in Slaugham, Worth and Balcombe purchased over a period from 1807 to 1813 and costing another £22,500.⁹²

Lord Erskine was clearly consolidating his estate in the north of the Forest, although it is difficult to ascertain with accuracy what properties were bought, sold or leased at what date. For example, *The Morning Post* noted in its edition on 20 March 1809, that Holmbush in St. Leonard's Forest had been purchased by Lord Erskine, and that it had previously belonged to the Hon. Mr Capel. It is possible that Hon. Mr Capel had leased Holmbush Farm House and lands from the Manners family until his bankruptcy. This is somewhat confirmed by the Land Tax records for 1806 which shows that a William Manners was assessed on the largest amount in the area of the Forest of £320 and at £5 in the pound the tax levied was £64, it was noted that there was no occupier at this time, which must have been after Capel's demise and before the estate was sold.⁹³ Papers in the Medwin archive show that John Thomas Capel's creditors had met at The White Hart Tavern, in Holborn, on 11 July 1804 and decided that all Capel's property should be sold to pay them all about 15 shillings in the pound. It was hoped that he would accede to the proposition with the same cheerfulness as the London creditors

⁹¹ Burke, B. (1852) *A Visitation of the seats and arms of the noblemen and gentlemen of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 1, London: Colburn, p. 24.

⁹² WSRO, Add MSS 28450.

⁹³ HM, MSS X2011 2498

did. Presumably he agreed, with or without cheerfulness, and his assets at Holmbush were valued at £2300.⁹⁴

The house was not valued, presumably because it was leased, but his furniture amounted to £600. It is interesting to note that of greatest value on the estate was the underwood, valued at £800. Wheat was the next item of value at £250, followed by cattle and sheep at £200, oats at £150, husbandry tackle, which presumably meant agricultural implements, at £100, and then barley and dogs at £60 each, fish at £30 and finally peas at £20. Sadly this was not sufficient to meet the whole of his debt which amounted to £3500. This list and valuation of goods does give a good insight into how varied in production the north of the Forest was at the turn of the century. Rabbits or conies are not mentioned which is surprising given the large warrens to the south and east, instead there is a reasonably mixed farm production, and at the time of the valuation both grain and meat prices were rising due to interrupted imports because of the war with France, pressure from an increasing population, and a series of poor harvests 1795 to 1800 which reduced stocks. One can only speculate as to why Lord John Thomas Capel went bankrupt, but it may not have been to do with the productivity of the Holmbush estate.⁹⁵

It appears that the whole estate was sold to William Sadler in 1819 for a deposit of £12,000 and a mortgage of £30,000, however on Lord Erskine's death in 1822, the estate of now 3033 acres went up for sale, perhaps the mortgage could not be paid.⁹⁶ There are letters in the Robert Peel archive which show that in 1824 Peel was interested in buying this estate, and in the summer of 1824 George Makepeace from Guildford provided him with a very thorough assessment of the pros and cons of such a purchase. At this time Robert Peel was Home Secretary in the Tory government of Lord Liverpool and engaged in police and criminal justice reforms. He was a baronet, and very wealthy from his families' cotton manufacturing base in Lancashire, 36 years

⁹⁴ *The Morning Post* (London) Monday, March 20 1809, Issue 11900, and HM MSS 415.1/2.

⁹⁵ HM, MSS 415.1, 415.2.

⁹⁶ WSRO, Add MS 22,961.

old and four years married to Julia Floyd with a growing family. He was living in Stanhope Street, London, whilst the family were renting Lulworth Castle in Dorset. This situation was not ideal and so Peel began to look for a home that would accommodate them all. He was familiar with Sussex having stayed with his sister in Bognor and he was friends with Lady Frances Shelley at Horsham. A letter from J.W. Freshfield, on 3rd August 1824, drew his attention to the sale of Lord Erskine's estate and enclosed the sale particulars and a copy of the Act of Parliament for the new Turnpike Road. Freshfield thought there was a possibility of converting the old house at Holmbush into a comfortable residence 'fit for the reception of a family of great respectability' at a moderate expense, and of rebuilding Buchan Hill. However, he wrote that he had heard that the houses and farm buildings were in poor repair and that the building of a new road from Horsham to Crawley nearby would be of concern.⁹⁷

George Makepeace was more detailed and critical with regard to the estate, and although it was written by Elwes that Lord Erskine had improved it, he seems to have spent money on adding to the extent of the estate, and planting trees, rather than general maintenance. Holmbush Lodge, Lot 9, was described by Makepeace as an old house with low rooms and irregular stairs, the garden was a wilderness with no water and the fencing falling down. The land he thought might be productive but was 'encumbered' with fruit trees. The farm buildings were tolerable, but the coach house and stabling was old and in need of repair, and he commented that he found it difficult to imagine how they came to place these building immediately in front of the house. To the back of the house, and very close to it, was to be the new public road. In the plantation of 289 acres, Makepeace regretted that there was not more Larch planted than Scots Pine, but this is good evidence for the planting of pine that was carried out by Lord Erskine. He acknowledged however, that the magnitude of the property, and the beauty of the situation with regard to its prospect, or view, was good, and improved by some 'fine ornamental timber' in that part of the estate, which unfortunately, he did not name. The value of this part of the estate of 1362 acres was

⁹⁷ BL, Add MS 40605, Peel Papers, and Hurd, D. (2007) *Robert Peel, a Biography*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, pp. 5-14, 81-9 (hereafter Hurd, 2007).

estimated to be £21,077. He noted that a further downside of the property was that the nearest church was in Crawley, regular attendance at Church was an important consideration for a respectable family.

Lots 10 and 11 are the other sections that Makepeace considered; there may have been other smaller lots that were possibly previously sold to William Sadler. Lot 10 was described as an elegant cottage with six acres of arable, and Lot 11 was two cottages with 489 acres, of this 133 acres were broken up for cultivation, 101 acres were tree plantation and the remaining 255 acres were heathland, which gives a good indication of the mix of landscape in this estate, and again there was no mention of rabbit warrens. Lot 11 also included Lord Erskine's home of Buchan Hill, which Makepeace wrote was built in a commanding but bleak situation, without the advantage of shrubs, shelter or ornament. Although recently built, Makepeace concluded that it was already going into decay, was inconvenient in construction, with low rooms, and by no means a desirable residence. Damning indeed, but Makepeace suggested that although he would not recommend the estate for income, for a shooting estate it would be satisfactory. He echoed previous sales particulars that game of every description was present in quantities on the estate, and mentioned that even the Black Cock, or Black Grouse, was present. He wrote that despite Lord Erskine's practice of selling off the strongest heath to the broom maker, and 'consequently depriving it of food', there was still good stock of Black Grouse on the estate.⁹⁸

Robert Peel, perhaps unsurprisingly, did not buy the Holmbush estate, but took a lease on a row of old houses called Whitehall Gardens, not far from the House of Commons, which he knocked down and built a new house designed by Robert Smirke in the Grecian revival style.⁹⁹ The whole Holmbush estate of 3033 acres was bought by Thomas Broadwood, a successful and very wealthy London piano manufacturer. He demolished the existing old house on the western side of the estate and built his mansion of Holmbush from stone dug on the estate, and improved the pleasure

⁹⁸ BL, Add MS 40605, Peel Papers.

⁹⁹ Hurd, 2007, p. 85.

grounds. Horsfield wrote that although Francis Edwards was the architect of this domestic gothic mansion 'the plan and the whole arrangement of the house, garden and grounds, were made by Mr Broadwood'. Horsfield was effusive about the setting of Holmbush, which had been praised by Makepeace. He reported that the view was of a rich valley, the middle ground highly diversified with trees of different tints, a lake contrasted with dark green firs and in the far distance were the Surrey hills, and wrote that the whole view 'together make a picture of considerable interest'. In other words, the picturesque had come to St. Leonard's Forest (see figure 4.6).¹⁰⁰



Figure 4.6: Copperplate engraving of Holmbush, home of Thomas Broadwood and built in 1826, illustrated in Horsfield *The History, Antiquities and Topography of the County of Sussex*, Vol. 2, p 222.

¹⁰⁰ Horsfield, 1835, p 222.

To the south of the Forest lay an area of approximately 1000 acres, which according to Elwes, was sold by John Aldridge in 1803 to Charles George Beauclerk who subsequently built a mansion there called St. Leonard's Lodge. *The Morning Post* reported in its section 'Fashionable World' that 'The Hon Mr Beauclerk who has purchased New Park Farm, near the Crab Tree on St. Leonard's Forest, last week laid the first stone of a spacious and elegant mansion house to be erected near the direction post on the roads to Horsham and Hand Cross'¹⁰¹ Horsfield described this house as a 'neat and commodious edifice' which was built of stone to the design of John Johnson. Although little more is known about it, Robin Loder wrote that it was in a superb location with views to the east over the old lakes in the valley and to the south the South Downs. The house itself did not last long as it was replaced in 1853 by the new owner W. Egerton Hubbard and hence became known as Leonardslee.¹⁰²

Although the Coolhurst estate was not noted by Cartwright, Horsfield mentions it in the south west of the Forest as the property of Arthur Chichester, Baron Templemore, who sold it in 1833 to the Marchioness of Northampton, who, he wrote, expended a considerable amount of money on improving the property.¹⁰³ In the 17th century the estate had been owned by the ironmasters Sir William Ford and John Caryll, and from their descendants 80 acres of arable pasture, woodland with all houses and buildings known as Coolhurst were sold to Francis Nash and Thomas White. By 1777 the freehold estate was held by John Linfield, lawyer, and leased to Francis Ripper for 21 years. Itemised in the lease were a barn, hovel and lands called Coolhurst, 6 acres of meadowland, parcels of arable, pasture, waste and barren land of 100 acres. The main dwelling house was to be retained by the Linfields, but proper habitation had to be provided to allow Ripper to carry out his farming business, and a new substantial oak floor was to be added to the barn. It was agreed that if Ripper ploughed, broke up,

¹⁰¹ *The Morning Post* (London, Eng) Wednesday, January 26 1803, Issue 10706 and Elwes, 1879, p. 27.

¹⁰² Hudson T.P. (ed.) (1986) 'Manors and other estates, St Leonard's Forest' in *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex VI* Pt 3, The Institute of Historical Research by Oxford University Press, p 18 (hereafter VCH Vol VI.3) and Loder, R (Undated) *Leonardslee, Lakes and Gardens*, Sussex, Leonardslee Gardens, pp. 2-4.

¹⁰³ Horsfield 1835, p 222.

sowed or converted into tillage any of the meadowland, the rent would increase. Linfield retained the right to take rabbits, cut and carry away wood and underwood.¹⁰⁴ There is an abstract of title dated 1808 of Charles Linfield and his eldest son George to the freehold of Coolhurst, but around this time it was sold to George Stewart, Earl of Galloway, and then to another Irish peer, Arthur Chichester, 1st Baron Templemore. In 1829 there was an agreement between Arthur Chichester and Robert Aldridge to exchange 10 acres of Heron's Coppice bounded on the north and west by college land called Highland's Farm (once leased by Sarah Hurst's father) and on the east by St. Leonard's Forest estate and on the south by the lane from Horsham to Hand Cross, for 28 acres of Forest land called Coolhurst Plains, also known as Coolhurst Tongh, presumably this increased the Coolhurst estate which Chichester later sold in 1833.¹⁰⁵

In considering the game that was available on the local estates, and in the Forest, it is clear that partridges were in abundance, certainly in the mid-18th century when letters from Elizabeth Ingram of Hills to her sister-in-law in Liverpool made clear that there were an 'immense number of partridges, enough to make one sick'. In addition to partridges and pheasant she wrote of 'very fine land rails', now known as corn crakes, and she noted that 'black game has been seen in the forest but not come to table'. By black game one can assume she was referring to black grouse. As previously noted, Makepeace had written of black cock on Lord Erskine's estate, and again this was black grouse. According to Garth Christian the last of the native stock of black grouse was shot on Chelwood Common in the Ashdown Forest about 1870.¹⁰⁶

From reading John Baker's diaries it appeared that hunting and shooting for provision of meat to eat was a pastime for the Horsham gentry, and although Baker did not participate in this himself, and in fact the Irwins employed a man to shoot game for them, he did note that partridges, snipe, pheasants, hare and wild turkey were all shot

¹⁰⁴ Horsham Museum, MSS 1765.

¹⁰⁵ HM MSS 1765-8, and Linfield, M (2002) The Linfields of Coolhurst, *Horsham Heritage*, Issue No.7 Autumn, pp. 41-57.

¹⁰⁶ Djabri, 2002, and Christian, G. (1968) *Ashdown Forest*, Forest Row: The Society of Friends of Ashdown Forest, p. 50.

locally and consumed amongst his friends. He wrote that he dined at Blunts on hunted venison and at Tredcroft's from their home produced two-year-old venison. There is little evidence of deer in St. Leonard's Forest, probably due to the lack of cover, although later sales particulars noted the Forest estates abounded in game of all types, which perhaps included deer. It is interesting to note that in the Medwin archive there is a letter criticising Tredcroft for hunting with hounds without a license.¹⁰⁷ Game laws had existed since the 14th century which forbade anyone other than Lords of the Manor, and later their appointed gamekeepers, to take game. This law was extended in 1671 to allow gamekeepers to seize the paraphernalia of poaching, and under warrant from a Justice of the Peace to search houses. The law continued to be extended so that in 1706 the buying and selling of game was forbidden, and originating in a statute of 1710 the Lord or Lady of the Manor, or large landholder, had to register the name of their designated gamekeeper with the Clerk of the Peace, so that only this one named person had the right to kill Hare, Pheasant, Partridge, Moor and Heath Game or Grouse and sell it. The records kept by the Clerks were known as the 'Gamekeepers Deputations' and in Sussex the two surviving volumes run from 1781.¹⁰⁸

The first mention of the Manor of St. Leonard's in the surviving Gamekeepers' Deputations is on the 16th September 1784 when John Aldridge was noted as the Lord of the Manor, and the gamekeeper was John Balchin of Beeding, a yeoman, the same details occur the following year but in August 1786 the gamekeeper changed to John Leopard of St. Leonard's Forest, a warrener. It is interesting to note that the type of worker from whom the post of gamekeeper was drawn moved from warreners at the end of the 18th century to more general servants, farmers and labourers at the beginning of the 19th century, indicating the demise of the rabbit warrens in the Forest at the turn of the century. However, in some cases the registration of gamekeeper with the Clerk of the Peace may have been a bureaucratic exercise. Correspondence between the Cloughs, of the Manor of Pinkhurst (Idehurst) and Thomas Medwin, a local Horsham solicitor, show that they appointed him to be their 'gamekeeper' as did

¹⁰⁷ HM MS2001.545.1.

¹⁰⁸ Salzman, L.F. (ed.) (1950) *Record of Deputations of Gamekeepers*, Lewes: Sussex Record Society, Vol. LI, pp. xv – xix (hereafter Salzman, 1950).

another landowner, although it is most unlikely that he was able or willing to carry out this function himself.¹⁰⁹ Salzman commented that 'The whole business is full of those fictions which the Law, particularly in earlier times delighted in'. He cites Manors that were not Manors, rights assigned that the landowners did not necessarily have, and menial servants and labourers who may well have had a higher status, so it is difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions from the records.¹¹⁰

In the early 19th century as rabbits became less valuable for their meat and fur, they began to be seen more as game animals, and also as ornament on some large estates in the country. As fox hunting with horses and hounds began to be practised, rabbits were encouraged as they were prey for foxes, which initially were few and far between on the estates. As new leases were written or renewed the sporting rights included rabbits, and were retained by the freeholder. However, with regard to St. Leonard's Forest, the Aldridge's head lease of 1801, stated that the Aldridges retained the sporting and fishing rights of the estate which specifically excluded rabbits and conies, which they allowed their leaseholders and tenants to kill.¹¹¹

d) Political and economic factors

In the late 18th century and early 19th century, war, enclosure and civil unrest were the factors affecting Horsham and the Forest communities, and the Forest landscape to a limited extent. War with France over the Canadian colonies started in 1756 and continued for seven years. The American Revolution in 1775 resulted in war, blockade and the loss of America as a colony. The French Revolution occurred in 1789 with the French King and Queen executed in 1793. A French Republic followed, and with it war with Europe for the following twenty years. In response to government policy barracks were built in Horsham in 1796 and an extra 960 young men added to the town's

¹⁰⁹ HM, MSS X2001-545-5.

¹¹⁰ Salzman, 1950, p. xvii.

¹¹¹ Bovill, Country Life, pp 214-32 and Sheail, J. (1971) *Rabbits and their history*. London, David & Charles Ltd., pp. 107-29. (hereafter Sheail 1971)

population.¹¹² To add to the country's difficulties in the last decade of the 18th century, there was not only the fear of war and invasion but poor harvests and food shortages. An Icelandic volcano, Laki, had erupted in 1783 and its effects on the atmosphere were well described by Gilbert White of Selborne as a 'peculiar haze, or smokey fog that prevailed for many weeks'. The eruption lasted eight months so that the climatic impact caused a run of poor harvests in the northern hemisphere with subsequent higher corn prices. However, the influx of the soldiers to the town with wages to spend assisted the shops, markets and public houses in Horsham to better cope with these hard times. Although, as Albery notes, the soldiers were not always appreciated with bad behaviour and theft being common, but he wrote that 'the extraordinary escapades and goings on of some of the soldiers at Horsham Barracks certainly prevented the town from getting dull'.¹¹³

During the period of 19 years from 1796 to 1815, after which the Barracks were dismantled, Horsham was the home, at different times, to 69 separate regiments or battalions of soldiers. Even before the Barracks were built soldiers camped and drilled on Horsham Common. They were reviewed and inspected there by the Duke of Cambridge in 1805 and the Duke of Norfolk in 1808. There appears to be no evidence that the Forest was used by the Militia, for apart from being divided into private estates, the large area of open common was very suitable and still freely available. Thomas has stated that before the 20th century the military avoided using woodland because of the obstacle it caused to the movement of men and supplies. It was only with the development of aircraft and aerial surveillance that wooded areas became useful cover for soldiers and armaments.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Knight, J. (2006) *Horsham's History, Volume 2, 1790 – 1880*, Horsham: Horsham District Council, p.16.

¹¹³ Horn, P. (1980) *The Rural World 1780-1850*, London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., pp. 37-68, and White, G. (1788-9, 1977) *The Natural History of Selborne*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., p.265-6, and Knight, J. (2006) *Horsham's History, Vol. 2 1790 – 1880*, Horsham: Horsham District Council, pp. 15-6, and Albery, 1947, pp. 511-520.

¹¹⁴ From a lecture given by Roger Thomas, Military Support Officer, English Heritage, at 'The Archaeology of Wooded Landscape' Conference, Meridian Hall, East Grinstead, Sussex 12/2/2011.

As the presence of the military in the town came to an end with the cessation of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, so Horsham's large common met its demise. Property prices were rising at the beginning of the 19th century, mainly due to population pressure for housing, manufacturing and the consolidation of farms. In addition, there was political pressure to enclose arising from the political ambition of the 11th Duke of Norfolk. The property owning burgesses of Horsham town who had rights of herbage and pannage on the common, also had political rights to vote for their Member of Parliament. The power to elect the town's representatives in Parliament had long been held by the Irwins at Hills Place due to their tight hold on the largest number of burgages. Throughout most of the 18th century the number of genuine independent burgages had declined through purchase of the freeholds by landowners like the Irwins and Norfolks. There remained only eight, out of the original medieval 52, by the turn of the century.¹¹⁵

The last, and politically astute, Lady Irwin died in November 1807 and her two sons-in-law, the Marquis of Hertford and Lord William Gordon inherited her property, however they had little interest in the town, apart from agreeing a good price for their inherited property. The Duke of Norfolk took this opportunity to buy their burgages for the inflated price of £91,475 in 1811 and so secured for himself control over two seats in parliament. He then turned his attention to enclosing the Common. There were now only six individual Burgesses to deal with and the Duke of Norfolk had by far the overwhelming amount of property. He petitioned for an Act of Parliament to enclose the common for the improvement of the waste. Notice was posted in the *Sussex Weekly Advertiser* in September 1811 of the intention of 'dividing, allotting and enclosing Horsham Common' with no mention of the Duke of Norfolk as promoter and beneficiary of this move. Those that benefited most from Horsham Common enclosure were undoubtedly the Duke of Norfolk as Lord of the Manor of Horsham, and Robert Hurst, brother of Sarah Hurst the diarist, who was accumulating wealth. The ambitious and those with some savings were given the opportunity to buy land and property that

¹¹⁵ Bowen, E. J. (2007) *The Enclosure of Horsham Common*, Horsham Museum Society, pp. 23-34 (hereafter Bowen, 2007).

perhaps would not otherwise have come their way. Bowen wrote that the enclosure led to considerable land speculation, and the first house built on the old Common was 'Lynwood' on the Duke's land.¹¹⁶

With encroachments and the granting of leases it was perhaps inevitable that Horsham Common would not survive the 19th century. However, an aspect of loss that is sometimes discounted or forgotten is the loss of natural beauty in such an open or wooded landscape. Dudley brings this to our attention in a comment regarding the area around Coolhurst, to the south west of the Forest and on the south eastern edge of the Common. He wrote:

'the vicinity of this seat was lately rendered particularly interesting by a romantic and beautiful glen called Dubbin's Green, one of the wildest and most secluded spots in the district, but it is greatly to be lamented, the enclosing of the adjacent common, has almost entirely destroyed the beauty of the scenery, and robbed the visitor of a truly rural and picturesque treat'.¹¹⁷

Horsham was not the only place to suffer such loss of natural beauty at the hands of enclosure; John Clare (1793-1864) regretted the loss of both his natural and social environment around his native Northamptonshire village, Helpston. He expressed this through poems such as *To a Fallen Elm* and *The Mores* which noted such losses.¹¹⁸

Hobsbawm suggested that in the three decades after Waterloo the populace of England were 'desperately dissatisfied' and large masses of them were revolutionary both politically and economically.¹¹⁹ Horsham was no exception to this, although it had come through the wars reasonably well, with a productive agricultural hinterland, manufacturing of leather and beer, and a thriving market, several banks had failed in

¹¹⁶ Albery, 1947, pp. 179-185, Bowen, 2007, pp 30-1, the author lives in one of the flats Lynwood Court, built on the site of Lynwood house.

¹¹⁷ Dudley, H. (1836, 1973) *The History and Antiquities of Horsham*. London, reprinted by J. Cramp Ltd., Horsham. pp 52-3.

¹¹⁸ Robinson, E. and Powell, D. (eds) (1984) *John Clare, Major Works*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. xix, 96-8, 167-9.

¹¹⁹ Hobsbawm, 1968, p. 73.

1816 and 1817. Unrest was evidenced by a petition presented to the House of Commons on Friday, 7th March, 1817 by Lord Folkestone. It was signed by 'many respectable signatures' following an 'orderly meeting' outside The Lamb public house in the Carfax. The petition related to a number of grievances, suggesting that the people were surrounded with difficulties and distress. The farmer no longer made a profit, trade was declining, and the labourer was becoming increasingly weak from lack of food and work, so it was difficult to bring up a family without parish aid. The petition asked for relief through lower taxes, which had brought much misery, increased by the sudden depreciation of paper money. They asked for a reduction in the state's shameful extravagance, such as the civil list and standing army. Finally they asked for electoral reform; Horsham was a notorious rotten borough and they objected to the consequences of this which were 'bribery, perjury, rioting and drunkenness'.

It was a well written and persuasive petition, which was supported by Sir Timothy Shelley and opposed by Robert Hurst, both Magistrates in Horsham. However, the whole debate was somewhat undermined by Robert Hurst, the Duke of Norfolk's nominee in the House, who suggested that some of the signatures were in the same hand and therefore fraudulent, and the debate was thus side-lined into discussing the legitimacy of petitions and their signatories. It is clear however, that there was real unrest in Horsham, which would increase in the following decades, although the grievances were not targeted at the enclosure of the commons as such, this would have contributed to the impoverishment of the poor.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Commons Sitting on Friday, March 7, 1817, House of Commons Hansard, First Series Vol. **35** accessible through: ProQuest, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, and Albery, W. (1927) *A Parliamentary History of Horsham 1295-1885*, London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., pp. 260-3.

4.3: Forest Landscape

a) Rabbits and wastes

In 1813, the Rev. Arthur Young published his report on agriculture in Sussex for the Board of Agriculture for the purpose of improving agricultural yields. It is useful to see how he described the landscape of St. Leonard's Forest at the turn of the 19th century, although remembering that he was an agriculturalist and saw no value in forest and heath. A fold out sketch of the soil of Sussex shows the Wealden Forest Ridge as sand and waste, and within that a large oval east of Horsham where St. Leonard's Forest is situated labelled 'waste' (see figure 4.7). Indeed, writing about this area he estimated that St. Leonard's Forest had 10,000 acres of 'poorest barren sand'. He noted that the depth of the sand on the rabbit warrens varied from 12 inches in many places to several feet in depth around Handcross, south east of the Forest. He also recorded that birch, hazel and beech, and other undergrowth, provided some profit.¹²¹

In his chapter on 'Wastes', Young did wonder why such immense tracts of land, intersected by turnpike roads and only 35 to 45 miles from London, were left unimproved. He recommended paring and burning and cited the Petworth estate as an example, in which 'an entire forest scene.....of no kind of use' was improved to produce 'extraordinary fine crops of wheat and oats'. He gave another example of improvement nearer to St. Leonard's Forest in Tilgate Forest where six acres of forest, which had been a rabbit warren, were turned over to more profitable potatoes. Young was certainly not an advocate of rabbits, he wrote that they were a nuisance to the county and flourished in proportion to the size of the wastes. He added that from Horsham Forest and Ashdown Forest considerable quantities of rabbits were sent to London. This confirmed that at the beginning of the 19th century the landscape of the Forest was still unimproved barren heathland, used mainly as rabbit warrens.¹²²

¹²¹ Young, A. (1813, 1970) *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Sussex*, Devon, David & Charles Reprints, pp 8-9 (hereafter Young, 1813).

¹²² Young, 1813, pp. 187-190, 391.

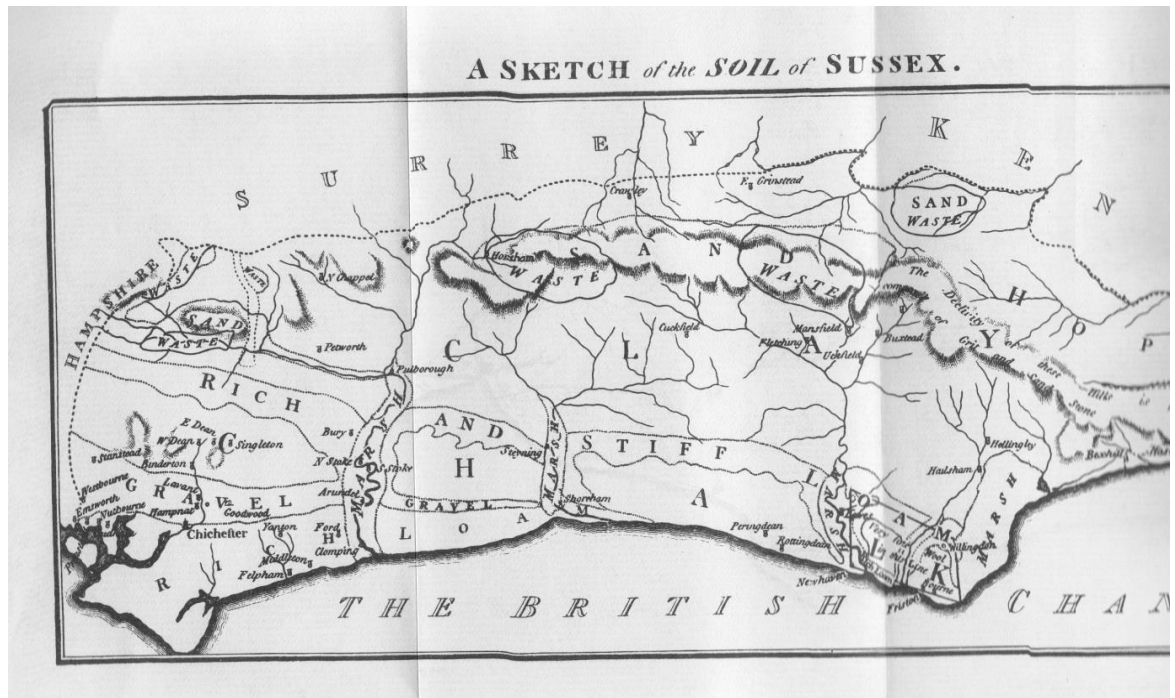


Figure 4.7: A Sketch of the Soil of Sussex showing ‘waste’ to the east of Horsham, reproduced from frontispiece of Young, A (1813,1970) *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Sussex*, Newton Abbot: David & Charles Reprints.

In the summer of 1823, William Cobbett rode south from Crawley town and then west towards Horsham on his rural rides. He memorably wrote that he had just ridden ‘over six of the worst miles in England, which miles terminate but a few hundred yards before you enter Horsham’. He then described the ride which went through the Buchan Hill and Holmbush estate, through the northern part of St. Leonard’s Forest and across the remains of Horsham Common which had been enclosed ten years previously. Cobbett noted positively that the land was elevated which enabled him to see the North Downs, Blackdown and the South Downs, which indicated that the Forest must have been reasonably clear of trees, despite Lord Erskine’s tree planting projects in the previous decade.

Brought up on a Surrey farm, William Cobbett moved from soldier to political journalist to radical commentator with much to say about the agrarian changes to the landscape that he saw in his rural rides through the southern counties of England. It is worth

quoting Cobbett at length as his descriptions are very valuable as a first-hand report of what the landscape of St. Leonard's Forest was like in the first two decades of the 19th century.

'The first two of these miserable miles go through the estate of Lord Erskine. It was bare heath with here and there, in the better parts of it, some scrubby birch. It has been, in part, planted with fir-trees, which are as ugly as the heath was; and, in short, it is a most villainous tract. After quitting it, you enter a forest; but a most miserable one; and this is followed by a large common, now enclosed, cut up, disfigured, spoiled, and the labourers all driven from its skirts. I have seldom travelled over eight miles so well calculated to fill the mind with painful reflections'.¹²³

One is left in little doubt that this was not desirable land, it was bare, scrubby and above all 'miserable'. It was poor arable land but rabbits had been a profitable resource in this Forest heathland and a passing comment from Cobbett while he was visiting Romney Marsh provided an indication of another useful product of the Forest, that of young cattle. While on the Marsh he was impressed with the sight of red, loose-limbed Sussex cattle, and marvelled that from Ashdown Forest and 'Saint Leonard's Forest, to which latter Lord Erskine's estate belongs, these wretched tracts and the not much less wretched farms' breed the cattle that fatten on the Marsh. He described how the cattle calve in the spring, are weaned on grass then put on stubble and fallow land, spend the winter in the yard on rough hay, pea husks and barley straw, and then graze the next two or three summers in the Forest, before going to Romney Marsh or other places with better pasture to be fattened up for slaughter. Such grazing in the Forest would have maintained the open heathland and been operated by the farms on the edge of the St. Leonard's Forest, and presumably in conjunction with some of the remaining warrens.¹²⁴

¹²³ Cobbett, 1830, p. 113..

¹²⁴ Cobbett, p 190, and Webb, N. (1986) *Heathlands*, London, Collins, pp. 46-8 (hereafter Webb, 1986).

Apart from the 1614 story of the dragon or worm in the Forest predating the conies in a nearby warren, there is more solid archival evidence of the presence of warrens, such as the Deputation of Gamekeepers records in the 1780s. Evidence also comes from leases and legal documents where property is described. For example, the 1801 Head Lease from John Aldridge to George Railton and William Hulls mentions the Great Warren and Plummers Plain Warren, with rights to kill rabbits and conies. As noted previously, the 1799 advertisement in the *Oracle and Daily Advertiser* for this same land itemised warren houses and 3 extensive warrens in a 30 acre enclosure which produced 1200 dozen conies a year. To the north of the Forest in the sales particulars of 1787 it was noted that part of Little Bewbush and Hopper Farms was a rabbit warren of 1597 acres with warren houses. When Lord Erskine sold part of Holmbush and Shelley in 1819 to William Sadler with sitting tenants, amongst these were Richard Tester in a Lodge House, with lands, grounds and warren, Charles Bartloy in Shelley Farm with warren, and Sibbalds Field Farm and warren also in occupation of Richard Tester, 1460 acres in total.¹²⁵

A recent Lidar-enhanced archaeological survey of St. Leonard's Forest confirms that there is substantial evidence of the Great Warren in the central part of the Forest. Despite past and more recent destruction by heavy forestry machinery, 15 pillow mounds and associated warren enclosures were identified (see figures 4.8 and 4.9).¹²⁶ Although it is difficult to imagine today, this does confirm the archival evidence that in the late 17th and 18th century the central part of St. Leonards Forest was open heathland managed for rabbit production in warren enclosures by skilled warreners. New agricultural techniques and crops were being introduced to raise productivity and rabbit farming could be considered a viable option on poor soils. However, by the late 18th century warrens were being taken out of use due to lower prices for rabbit meat

¹²⁵ BL, MS 5685, and HM, MS 3142 and WSRO Add MS 22,961, and *Oracle and Daily Advertiser* (London) Saturday, June 29 1799, Issue 22023..

¹²⁶ Butler, C., Blandford, V., Locke, A. (2011) *A Lidar-enhanced Archaeological Survey of St. Leonard's Forest, West Sussex*, Chris Butler Archaeological Services for Forest Enterprise and Weald Forest Ridge Historic Environment Awareness Project (Hereafter Lidar survey 2011).

and fur, the availability of wild rabbits, improved agricultural and silvicultural practices which allowed more marginal land to become competitively economic.¹²⁷

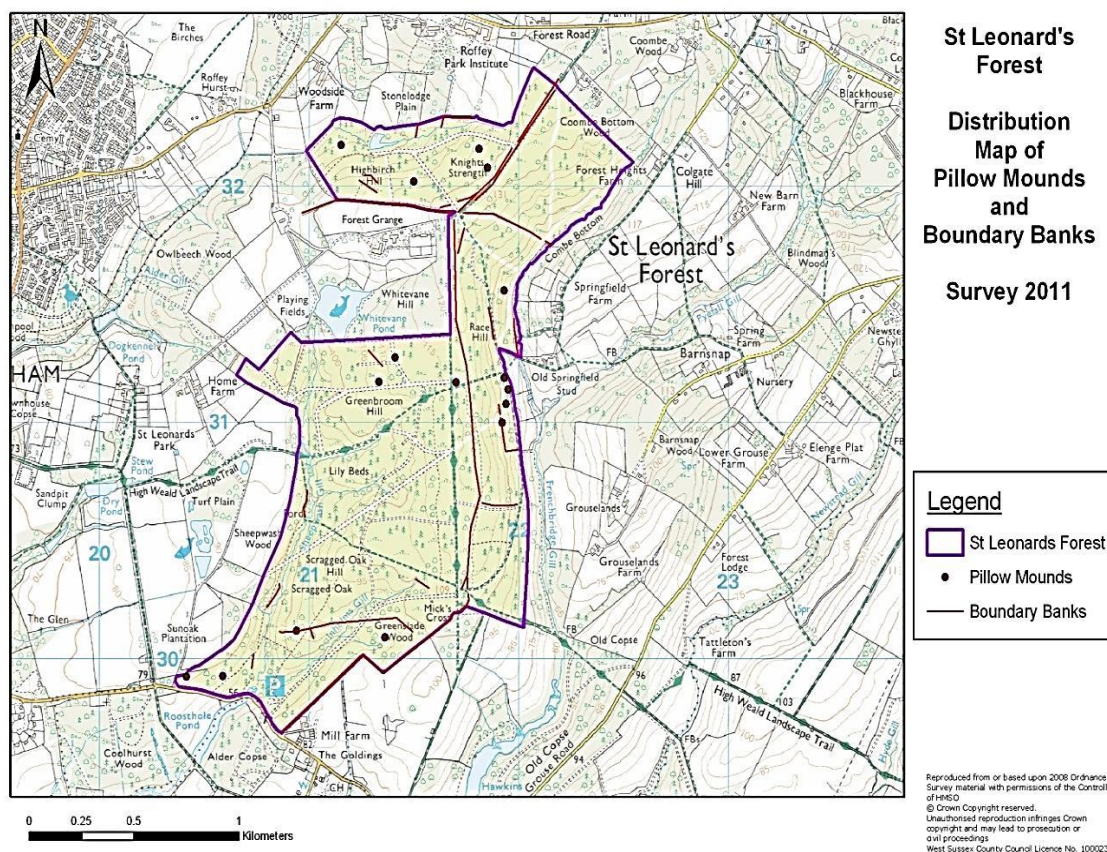


Figure 4.8: Distribution map of pillow mounds and boundaries from Lidar- enhanced Archaeological Survey of St. Leonard's Forest, West Sussex, June 2011. Figure 15 p 49.

¹²⁷ Williamson, T. (2007) *Rabbits, Warrens and Archaeology*, Stroud: Tempus Publishing Ltd., pp. 18-9. (Hereafter Williamson, 2007) and Sheail, J. (1971) *Rabbits and their history*, London: David & Charles Ltd., pp. 74-100 (Hereafter Sheail, 1971) and Sheail, J. (1978) Rabbits and agriculture in post-medieval England, *Journal of Historical Geography*, **4**, pp. 343-55.



Figure 4.9: Photograph of archaeological remains of a pillow mound at GPS position MSW8819, from Lidar- enhanced Archaeological Survey of St. Leonard's Forest, West Sussex, June 2011.

Rabbits were initially a high maintenance stock. They were susceptible to damp and cold, the quality of the meat and fur being dependent on dry weather, with rabbits responding surprisingly quickly to spells of good weather. Warreners dug ditches and erected banks and walls in order to deflect water, encourage drainage, and keep the rabbits as dry as possible. These earthworks also protected the rabbits by keeping them within the warren and deterring their many natural predators, such as foxes, stoats, cats, hawks and rats. Rabbits took time to settle into a warren and so warreners assisted them through the construction of pillow mounds within the warren, which were low mounds of soft earth. These were mostly post medieval and some had specific uses such as maternity units, but mostly they encouraged the rabbits in their initial burrowing while protecting the animals from wind and rain. They also made it easier to harvest the rabbits, as deep burrows could be a problem for warrener and ferret or dog, and 'purse' nets could easily be put over the burrow entrance, or long

nets put the whole length of the pillow mound, between the mound and the warren wall.¹²⁸

Pillow mounds were more common in the south and west of Britain, usually constructed on sloping ground and at right angles to the contours. They could be single or in groups, conjoined or not, some were rectangles and some had flat tops. There were local variations and Sussex appears to have had some very long pillow mounds, Williamson states that these were mostly more than 50 metres in length and in some cases over 200 metres. Tebbutt in observing earthworks which he identified as pillow mounds on Ashdown Forest wrote that a typical example was long and straight, or slightly curved, a bank thrown up between two ditches, about 2 foot in height and 22 feet in depth and up to 150 yards long (137 metres). Tebbutt also suggested that the shape was due to the method of taking the rabbits and thought the long banks were associated with the traditional long rabbit nets which were set up at night between the rabbit feeding grounds and the burrows.¹²⁹ An interesting feature on an early OS map of 1875 clearly shows pillow mounds to the east of Colgate, just north of the Horsham – Pease Pottage road and identified as Windmill Burrow. Four mounds radiate out from a central point, and the whole measures approximately 100 metres by 75 (see Figure 4.10).

¹²⁸ Sheail, 1971, pp 17-71.

¹²⁹ Williamson, 2007, p. 94 and Tebbutt, C.F. (1968) Rabbit Warrens on Ashdown Forest, *Sussex Notes and Queries*, Vol **17**, pp 52-4.

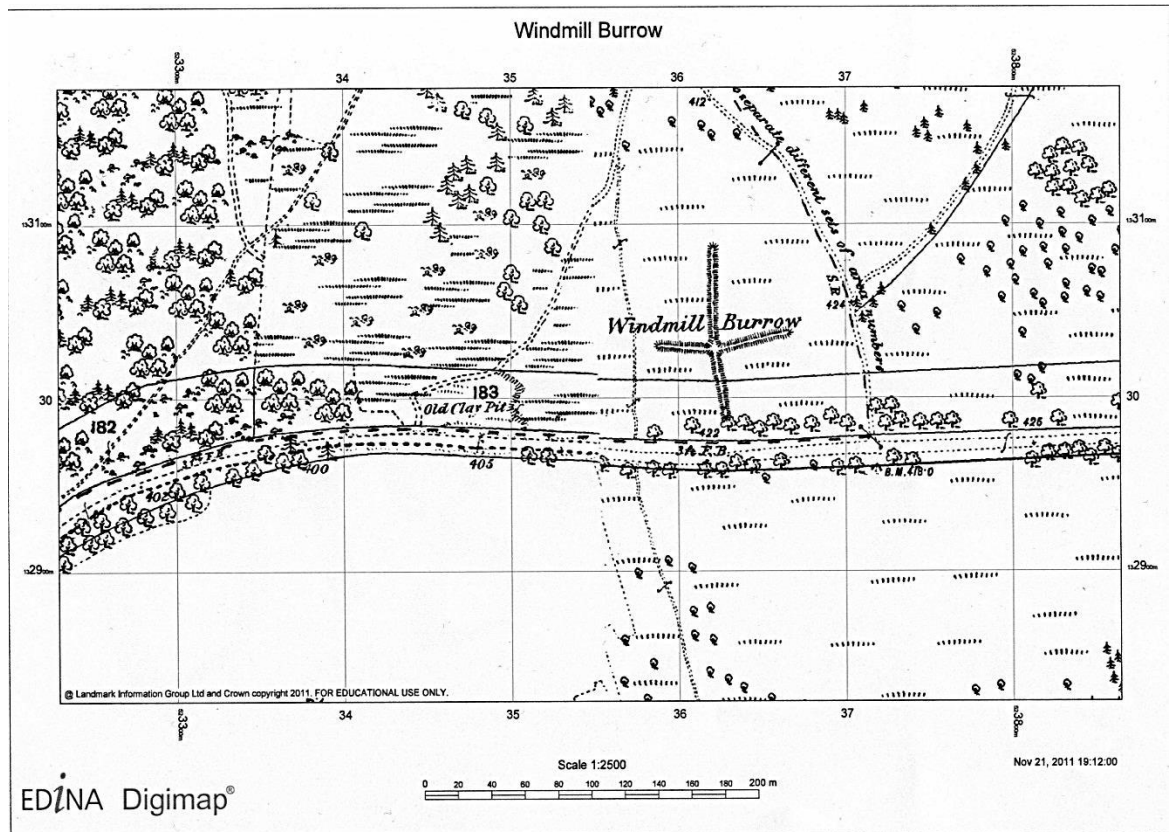


Figure 4.10: Windmill Burrow, Colgate, OS County Series 1:2500 1st Edition, 1875, reproduced with permission of Edina Historic Digimap.

Until 2011 there was limited archaeological identification of pillow mounds within St. Leonard's Forest despite archival evidence of warrens from the 17th century. The nearest identified ones appear to be at Windmill Burrow near Colgate (see figure 4.10) and at Oldhouse Warren in Tilgate Forest, to the east of St. Leonard's Forest according to OS Explorer map 134 at TQ 295343. However, with the latest Lidar-enhanced archaeological survey completed in June 2011 pillow mounds were identified within the modern boundaries of St. Leonard's Forest. Much of the area surveyed covered the central part of the Great Warren, between Hammerpond Road to the south and Forest Road to the north. Unusually, boundary banks or walls that defined and divided the warren were identified, as well as the pillow mounds (see figure 4.8), although survival

of earthworks regarded as warren boundaries of the Great Warren were noted in the VCH by referral to 1981 OS map and grid references given.¹³⁰

Interestingly, a unique circular pillow mound was identified of 148 metres in circumference with a pronounced bank of the uphill side of about 1.5 metres high, and ditch 1 metre wide. This was an isolated pillow mound in the south east of the area at OS reference TQ213300, and one wonders whether this could be a maternity unit away from bucks which could kill the young, and protective of the valuable does from predators and where the nets for culling would not apply. Another pillow mound was found built into a boundary bank with rounded top, approximately 26 metres long with ditches 1 metre wide. Four pillow mounds were found together on very steeply sloping land to the eastern boundary running down to Combe Bottom, which could hardly have been used for anything else. These were found to be 34-45 metres long and up to 1.5 metres high and between 3-4 metres wide with flat tops, and nearby were enclosing warren walls which the researchers regarded as unusual to find in south east England.¹³¹

The husbandry of rabbit production impacted on the landscape of the Forest through the throwing up of banks, ditches and pillow mounds, and the building of warren lodges and the establishment of place names associated with warrens. Lodges were tall remote buildings standing at the highest point of the warren to allow the warrener good oversight of his charges. Inside were kept nets, traps and guns, racks for drying rabbit skins and food for the rabbits in winter. Shakespeare uses the metaphor 'as melancholy as a lodge in a warren' although he may have had in mind the lonely isolated lodges of the Breckland rather than Sussex lodges, but those in St. Leonard's Forest would have stood alone.¹³² The Gardner and Gream map of 1795 (see figure 4.1) shows two Lodge Houses in the Forest, one to the south east, the other to the

¹³⁰ Hudson T.P. (ed.) (1987) *Forest, The Victoria History of the County of Sussex* Vol VI Pt 3., The Institute of Historical Research by Oxford University Press, p 15 (hereafter VCH Vol VI.3).

¹³¹ Lidar survey 2011.

¹³² Shakespeare 'Much Ado about Nothing' Act 2 Scene 1.

north west, and these may well have been the old warren lodge houses. The one in the south east appears to be Carter's Lodge in the later maps. Edward Carter, husband of Elizabeth Aldridge, built a new brick house at this site probably around the time of the Gardner and Gream map, which survives to the present day, and the one in the north was renamed Rangers Lodge, although this disappeared in the 19th century.

The landscape of St. Leonard's Forest has accumulated some place names that are resonant of rabbit husbandry. Generally these can vary from the straight forward 'warren', which is the post medieval name for a place of rabbit farming, to the older 'coneygarth', and variations of this such as 'coneygres', 'coneygar' or 'cunygre'. For example, Coneycroft Wood in Warnham, previously Conyefelde', and Coneyburrow Shaw in Mayfield, were clearly places of rabbit farming. Pillow mounds were commonly called 'berries', 'buries' or 'burrows' by the 16th century and so these names too could be applied to certain areas used for rabbit farming, such as Windmill Burrow near Colgate, although Glover has noted such place names more often refer to nearby earthworks which are not necessarily pillow mounds. Gelling suggested the derivation in the Old English 'beorg', or the Anglian 'berg', to mean hill or mound, and warns of the similarity to other words of different meaning. Apart from Windmill Burrow which has now disappeared from 20th and 21st century maps, St. Leonard's Forest has two other place names suggesting rabbit husbandry, that of Warren Wood to the south of the current Forest and originally central, unsurprisingly adjacent to Carter's Lodge.¹³³ The other was Hole Warren which was the known name of a field near Lower Beeding in 1838.¹³⁴

The impact of rabbits on the Forest landscape could also be seen in the alternation of the presence of certain herbs and plants. Rabbits avoid plants that are woody, hairy, spiky, stinging or poisonous, and they enjoy young plants, seedlings and the bark of young saplings. They will intensively graze clover and trefoil to extinction, and to the

¹³³ Glover, J. (1997) *Sussex Place-Names*, Newbury, Countryside Books, p 57 and Gelling, M. (1984) *Place-Names in the Landscape*, London, J.M. Dent & Sons., pp 127-8.

¹³⁴ VCH VI.3, p 15.

benefit of bracken and nettles. A sufficiency of the right food was therefore a problem for the warreners particularly in winter, as rabbits could easily die in a hard winter, thus reducing their profits. One way of increasing the quality and quantity of grass was to pare the turf from the ground and burn it in heaps, the ash was then spread on the earth, possibly crops could be grown for a short rotation, and then grass put down again. This method could double the number of rabbits in an area and there is some evidence that burning of turf was normal practice in St. Leonard's Forest since the 17th century with fires sometimes getting out of control.¹³⁵

Rabbits were normally killed at the end of the year when their fur was thickest, the silver-grey was the most prized and interbreeding discouraged while the price of this fur was high. Silver-greys were bred mainly in Lincolnshire, black rabbits were also bred for their fashionable fur, although the common grey fur was popular as it was cheap and could be treated by taking off the skin and napping. Sheail wrote that in Sussex rabbits were killed in August, before their fur could develop a thick coat, this was because there was not enough food to keep them until their fur was ready. They were thus called flesh warrens as the rabbits could only be sold for meat. Rabbits often went hungry in winter and spring and could make a nuisance of themselves on nearby agricultural land, although it was only in the late 18th century that they began to be viewed as a pest.¹³⁶

A newspaper report from January 1814 commented on the extremely severe weather and wrote that a Member of Parliament travelling though Sussex from London had stated that 'The wild rabbits in St. Leonard's Forest in great numbers were standing more like sheep, eating hay near the road', one can assume that the rabbits from the warrens were now wild and having to fend for themselves in harsh winters.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ The National Archives (TNA) E134/36Chas2/East22.

¹³⁶ Sheail, 1971, pp 74-103.

¹³⁷ *The Morning Post*, Wednesday 19 January 1814, Issue 13415.

The devaluing of the rabbit warrens occurred partly due to rabbits becoming better adapted to the climate and countryside and establishing wild warrens, and partly due to foreign cheap imports of fur. Rackham wrote that the price of a rabbit had fallen from 7 pence in 1600, half a daily wage, to 5 pence, about one fifth of the daily wage, by 1760, and in the 19th century they became even cheaper as tariff reforms allowed the import of cheap rabbits from Belgium. Sheail quoted from the 1872-3 House of Commons Select Committee which reported 'both high and low now use rabbits; it is quite an everyday dish in every house'. Landowners therefore began to consider other ways of using their land, and trees for timber were becoming a viable alternative. It is difficult to know exactly when and how the warrens in St. Leonard's Forest were abandoned or broken down, but it is likely to have happened by the turn of the 19th century.¹³⁸

Archival evidence shows that at the start of the 19th century parts of the Great Warren were being parcelled up and leased out with permission given to kill and destroy all the conies and rabbits on the premises. In 1807 John Watling of Lambeth sublet to Lawrence Coddington Worthy of Middlesex 480 acres of Great Warren known as the Rangers House. Permission was given for a road to be laid and it is clear some further division of the Forest had taken place as the lease mentioned land divided by rail and post from that in the occupation of a Charles Bartlett, and from a plantation of fir trees belonging to Stone Lodge, and from other pieces of land that were occupied by a Mr Wilcoke, John Watling and Mrs Aldridge. These sections of land were all fenced off from one another, and the requirement of a 'good and sufficient hedge' was recommended to be established between them.¹³⁹

In 1811 there was an assignment of the original lease of 3000 acres in the centre of the Forest to eight London merchants. All of these were corn merchants, apart from one timber merchant, Baker, and Peter Barlow from the City. After some of these

¹³⁸ Rackham, O. (1986) *The History of the Countryside*, London, Dent & Sons Ltd., pp 47-8, and Sheail, 1971, pp 78-81.

¹³⁹ HM MSS 1200, 1200A, 3119.

merchants went bankrupt, further agreement was made for the assignment of the whole lease to this Peter Barlow, and it was subsequently inherited by his three daughters, Abigail, Elizabeth and Sarah in 1837. It is interesting that London corn and timber merchants were involved in dividing up parts of the Forest. This was either purely financial business or they were interested in profiting from the small amount of existing timber, it seems unlikely that there would be any prospect of arable crops being grown in any quantity or quality. More likely was the growing attraction for small farms and estates as prospects for a home within easy reach of London, and as Helena Bennett proved the Forest was beginning to be considered as a quiet secluded attractive place to live.¹⁴⁰

Fir plantations were beginning to be established by the first decade of the 19th century. Dorothea Hurst wrote in the 1860s that 'many years ago there was an avenue of firs called Mike (or Mick) Mills Race about three quarters of a mile in length. It stood on high ground, and was a remarkable feature in the country'. She described how it was nearly destroyed by a violent hurricane on 29th November 1836. She also quoted from an 'older publication' called *The Mirror*, no date given, which reported a 'beautiful avenue a mile and a quarter long, containing 15,000 full grown trees'.¹⁴¹ Ellis, in referencing *Murray's Hand Book of Kent and Sussex* wrote that the principal avenue in the Forest was Mick Mills Race and the 15,000 trees were 80 years old, the older avenue having been entirely destroyed. Ellis also repeated the myth of racing with the devil, but differently from that noted in Chapter 3, which was that Mike Mills ran for a wager and dropped dead at the end of the race. This has slightly more credibility than racing the devil and winning. There is the suggestion that the avenue was in fact planted by Michael Mills who was recorded in that area of the Forest in 1720. This seems likely but no reason for the planting was given, perhaps there is a grain of truth in racing for wagers.¹⁴² Burstow recounts in his diaries of witnessing horse racing in the Forest, but at a much later date and situated to the west of New Lodge. However,

¹⁴⁰ HM MSS 3142, 3143.1, 3143.2.

¹⁴¹ Hurst, D. (1868) *Horsham: its History and Antiquities*, William Macintosh, pp. 160-2.

¹⁴² Knight, J. (2006) *Horsham's History, Volume 1 Prehistory to 1790AD*, Horsham: Horsham District Council, p. 65 and Ellis, Parks and Forests, footnote 111.

other races or sports were possibly the origin of such a feature, such as those held at Robert Aldridge's coming of age celebrations (see figure 4.3).¹⁴³ The avenue can be clearly seen in OS map 1879 (see figure 4.11 and 6.15).

William Cobbett noted in 1823 that in riding over Lord Erskine's estate of Bewbush and Holmbush in the north of the Forest that 'It has been, in part, planted with fir-trees, which are as ugly as the heath was' so by that time some planting of fir had been completed. When 3033 acres of Holmbush was bought by Thomas Broadwood after Erskine's death in 1822, he began the creation of a new house, gardens and pleasure grounds. Horsfield noted in 1835 that firs grew pretty well on the land, and that the landscape scenery has been greatly improved. By the 1850s when Burke made his 'visitations' to this estate, he wrote that 'the owner has at different periods planted more than a million trees – larch, fir, oak, sweet chestnut, and other varieties'. So there was considerable planting of trees in the northern part of the Forest in the first decades of the 19th century.¹⁴⁴

There were old pollards of oak and beech still left in the centre of the Forest, specifically around the south end of Mick Mills Race. Hurst notes that at the time of her writing there were some 'magnificent beech trees and fine oaks' still remaining, and she singles out the 'splendid tree called the 'Sun Oak' by the lodge' which was at the southern entrance to the Aldridge estate. It is still standing today with a girth of 8.9 metres and therefore an approximate age of 835 years (see figure 4.12 and frontispiece).¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Albery, W. (ed.)(1975) *Reminiscences of Horsham being Recollections of Henry Burstow*, Norwood,USA: Norwood Editions, pp. 30-3.

¹⁴⁴ Horsfield, 1835, p 222-3 and Burke, B. (1852) *A Visitation of the seats and arms of the noblemen and gentlemen of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol 1*, London, Colburn, p 24, and HM MS 3119.

¹⁴⁵ Woodland Trust Ancient Tree inventory and ready reckoner for aging UK Oak species, and email exchange with Dr. Sarah MacKenzie, University of Sussex, 4.11.2011.

Mick Mills Race OS 1879

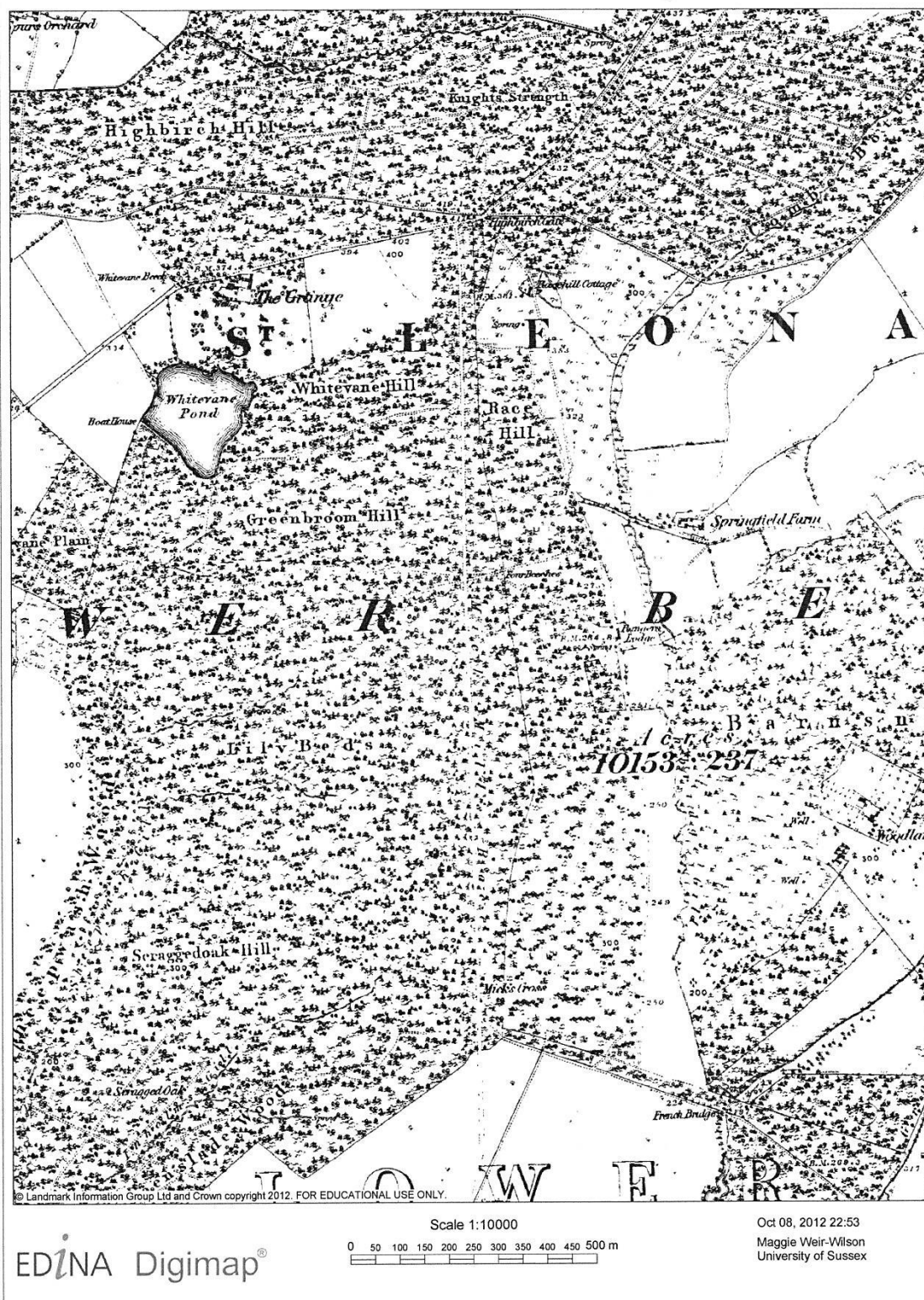


Figure 4.11: The avenue of Mick Mills Race from OS County Series 1:10560 1st Edition, 1879, reproduced with permission of Edina Historic Digimap.



Figure 4.12: Photograph of the Sun Oak taken by Judith Hoyle in May 2011 at OS map ref: TQ202299.

With regard to the development of agriculture, fields and farms within the Forest, a close examination of the Gardner and Gream Sussex map of 1795 (see figure 4.1) shows small fields having been set out to the north of Holmbush, in what were perhaps the more productive land situated in a valley. There appears to be some design or gardening within the enclosed area of New Lodge, owned by the Aldridges, and radiating entrance routes through parkland. West of this are small farm fields, possibly belonging to Highland Farm and then south there are a string of farms along the Horsham – Handcross Road, Goldings Farm, Hammer Pond farm, Seymours, Southland Farm and further south is Newells. Plummers Plain to the east and the area sold to Charles Beauclerk are still mostly shown as scrubby heath, although there are a group of small fields intruding into what would become his land at the beginning of the 19th century. Within the central core of the Forest, the Aldridge land before leasing of the 3000 acres, the Lodge houses are shown, including Stone Lodge on the Horsham – Pease Pottage road, but no farms within this area are marked. There is however some suggestion that Springfield Farm, north of Hawkins Pond, was built before 1800 and there were also some houses at Colgate and Crabtree, although these too are not marked on the Gardner and Gream map.¹⁴⁶

The later first one inch Ordnance Survey map of 1813 (see figure 4.2) shows some buildings at the site of Springfield Farm, although it is not named as such, and adds Hyde Farm in the east with nearby square fields marked out of arable or pasture in the heathland, and Wins Farm to the north by Shepherds Field Forest, which later presumably became Shepherds Field Farm. One building is shown at Colgate and several in Crabtree, and again none at Lower Beeding as these small hamlets were just becoming established at the turn of the century. Indeed the clergy writing to Magdalen College in 1832 note that for a long period the Forest was an ‘uncultivated waste. Latterly however, its circumstances have been materially altered, for not only has the usual increase taken place in the old population but the cultivation of a large portion of the district has naturally attracted a considerable number of fresh settlers’.¹⁴⁷ One

¹⁴⁶ VCH VI.3, p10, 22.

¹⁴⁷ Magdalen College Archive, Oxford, MS 741.1.

could conclude that at the turn of the century there was some limited reclamation of the forest wastes due to the leasing and subleasing of smaller parcels of land, but the northern part of the Forest was changing more rapidly due to the more productive land in the lower slopes towards Bewbush, and the planting of quantities of trees by new landowners.

b) Quarries, mines and bricks

Diggings for stone, clay, sand and marl changes the profile of the landscape and leaves evidence that can be seen today. The Horsham area was, and still is, well known for the production of large grey flat Horsham Stone which could be split and therefore mainly used in roof tiling and paths. This had never been quarried in the Forest, but nearby, to the south and west of St. Leonard's Forest. The main outcrop was a low ridge that ran from Monks Gate, through Nuthurst and west towards Sedgwick and Denne Hill. The area around Sedgwick was particularly abundant and evident in the buildings and gardens of Sedgwick Place, while the Denne estate had numerous productive quarries which produced a useful annual income.¹⁴⁸ However, ordinary sandstone good enough for building could be obtained in St. Leonard's Forest as Horsfield, Cartwright and Burke all mention that Thomas Broadwood's mansion at Holmbush was built with stone quarried on the estate.¹⁴⁹

The recent Lidar survey identified four quarries in their survey area of the central forest, two were close to Forest Road, the Horsham-Pease Pottage road, and it is suggested in the survey that these were used for quarrying stone for road building.¹⁵⁰ It is however, also possible that they could have been used to provide building stone for the few early 19th century stone houses erected at Colgate nearby and perhaps Lower Beeding. It is interesting to note that in 1848 it was reported by Lewis in his A

¹⁴⁸ Birch, R. (2006) *Sussex Stones, the story of Horsham Stone and Sussex Marble*, Birch, pp 33-7, and Djabri, S. C. (2008) The Eversfields of Denne House, Part 1, *Horsham Heritage*, Issue No. 17, Autumn, pp. 11-33.

¹⁴⁹ Horsfield, 1835, p. 222, Cartwright, 1830, p. 365 and Burke, 1852, p24.

¹⁵⁰ Lidar survey 2011, p 19.

Topographical Dictionary of England in reference to the Forest that 'Ironstone is found, and building stone of excellent quality is plentiful and extensively quarried'.¹⁵¹ Leases such as the head lease of 1801 between John Aldridge and Railton and Hull details all quarries mines and pits together with other assets within the St. Leonard's Forest estate, however John Aldridge specifically kept for his own use and those to whom the lease would revert, the right to 'dig and carry away any quantity of stone from the quarry on Barnsnap Hill for their own use and not for sale'. This quarry, also known as Great Ground, was situated south of Colgate near Springfield farm, one of the few 18th century farms established in the centre of the Forest on Aldridge land. It must have been a real and sustainable asset to have building stone on an estate for new build or repair.¹⁵²

The Forest does appear to have been pitted with a variety of remains of diggings from the 19th century. An OS map from 1879 gives good detail of old gravel pits, quarries and sand pits. As they are specifically marked as 'old' one could assume they were out of use by the late 19th century. An example of an old clay pit can be seen identified to the west of the Windmill Burrow, and east of Colgate (see figure 4.10). There are three old gravel pits identified, one at Leonardslee, one across the road at South Lodge, and one in Holmbush, all three estates that had large gardens and the gravel would have been of great use in these. One sand pit can be identified south of New Lodge in the parkland and another in the Forest itself. There is an old quarry marked to the east of Carters Lodge and another east of French Bridge and Hawkins Pond, and another south of Hammer Pond, all near the road from Horsham – Cowfold, and so they could have been used for road stone or building stone.

Iron bearing ore had been dug from the Forest in the 16th and 17th centuries to fuel the local iron manufacture, and so the remains of these mine pits would have been clearly visible in the 19th century Forest landscape. The Lidar survey picked these up well and

¹⁵¹ Lewis, S. (ed.) (1848) *A Topographical Dictionary of England*, pp. 194-9. Accessible through: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=50789>

¹⁵² HM, MS 1200.

identified 28 sites of mine pits, which were particularly dense around the Colgate area. Mine pits could be identified as small deep pits with rounded spoil heaps in a horseshoe shape around the edge, and from observation of the Lidar results they are packed surprisingly close together (see figure 4.13).¹⁵³

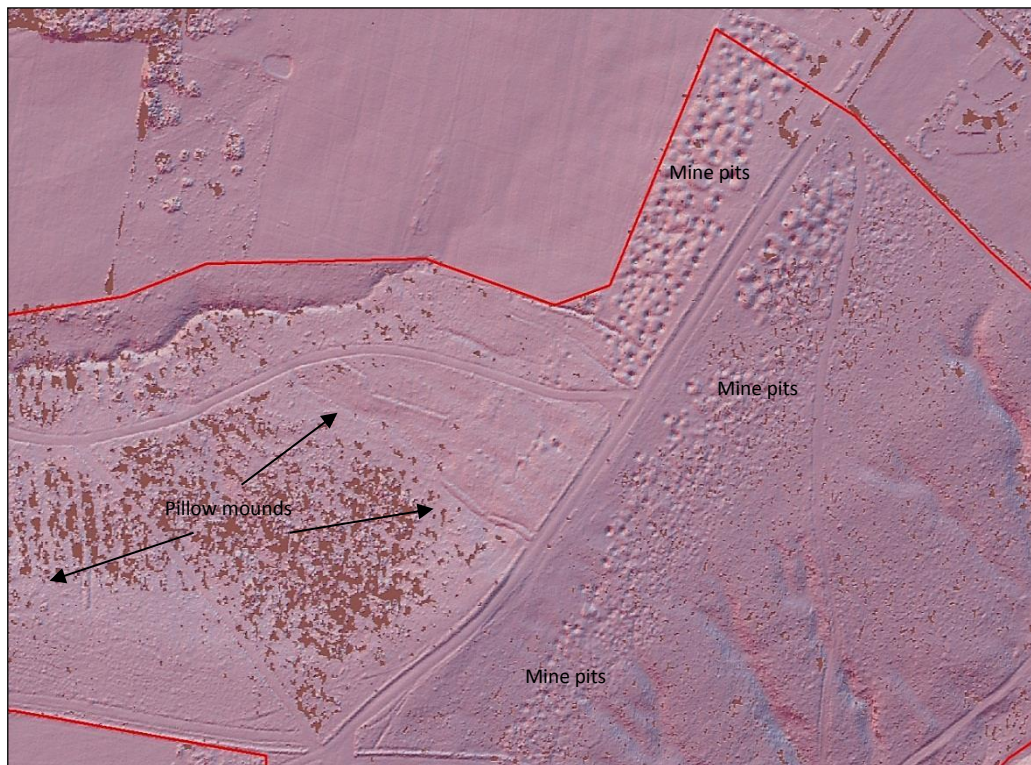


Figure 4.13: Mine pits and pillow mounds, from Lidar- enhanced Archaeological Survey of St. Leonard's Forest, West Sussex, June 2011. Figure 17 p 51.

Clay outcrops also occurred in the Forest and so brickmaking was another use of Forest resources which impacted on the landscape. As early as 1584 a clamp of bricks were burnt in St. Leonard's Forest and used both for building Gosden Furnace and for building the house of its ironmaster, Roger Gratwick. There is however no evidence as to where this clay was dug from in the Forest or where the bricks were burnt. There was a brickyard at Plummers Plain on the edge of the Leonardslee estate in 1803 which lasted about 80 years, and another at Crabtree further south in 1816. By the later 19th

¹⁵³ Lidar survey 2011, p 18.

century a brickyard had been established in the centre of Lower Beeding village, but the most well-known was on the Holmbush estate. It seems likely that although the clay was a local natural resource, it was not until the growing pressure of population, the subsequent need for houses and the fashion for brick built houses that these brick yards developed.¹⁵⁴

c) **Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the impact of social, economic and political factors of Georgian Horsham in relation to the landscape of St. Leonard's Forest. The French and Napoleonic wars and the enclosure of Horsham Common had little impact on the Forest landscape itself, which remained in private hands. It is clear, however, that there were different attitudes amongst the landowners to their estates and how they managed them. It is this that had the greater impact and began the slow change from wasteland to valued property. The Aldridge family in the centre of the Forest were tied by an 18th century Trust which required them to sell or lease their land to provide annuities for family members, which they did and thereby encouraged an increase of small farms, huts and people in the Forest. By contrast, to the north of the Forest, Lord Erskine, followed by Broadwood, valued their land for sport and status, something to be improved, designed and enjoyed for its own sake, trees were planted and farms established. These very different approaches began to have a visible effect on the Forest landscape in the 19th and early 20th century as will be seen in the next chapter.

Due in part to the proximity of the prosperous market town of Horsham, and the policy of the Aldridges, the population in the Forest was increasing. In addition, the presence of gypsies and travellers, unable to set up on the Common due to enclosure began to be seen in the Forest, as noted by Ellis.¹⁵⁵ Thus by 1830 there was moral concern growing amongst the middle classes and clergy, and disquiet in the labouring

¹⁵⁴ Beswick, M. (1993,2001) *Brickmaking in Sussex, A History and Gazetteer*, Midhurst: Middleton Press, pp 181-2.

¹⁵⁵ P.P. 1867-8, **XVII**, and Ellis, 1925, p 176.

classes. However, the well-off had begun to see the Forest as picturesque and beautiful, somewhere restful and quiet to establish a small estate away from the fast expanding noisy and dirty city of London. With better communications such as the turnpike roads, and later railways, small estates in the Sussex countryside became both feasible and desirable within reach of London and Brighton. The following chapter will describe the playing out of these tensions and the increasing effect on the changing Forest landscape.

CHAPTER 5

Victorian and Edwardian Reappraisal, St. Leonard's Forest **from 1830-1914**

*So I will rest in hope, To see wide plains, fair trees, and lawny slope, The morn, the eve,
the light, the shade, the flowers, Clear streams, smooth lakes, and overlooking towers.*

John Keats, from *Specimen of an Induction to a Poem*, 1819¹

The previous chapter described how the perception of St. Leonard's Forest was beginning to change during the Georgian period from an undervalued landscape to one of desirable estates with picturesque prospects. Wealthy manufacturers such as Thomas Broadwood had bought the Holmbush Estate from landed aristocracy and this chapter will show how he developed his park and garden. Wealthy merchants such as William Egerton Hubbard also bought an estate within the Forest, and this influx of new money helped to shape, or redefine, the Forest as valuable property. It is clear from the last chapter that these new wealthy owners had a different attitude to their estates from the older Aldridge family in New Lodge who did not have the money, or the desire, to redesign what they owned with such enthusiasm.

Brandon notes how rapidly London had expanded in the early 19th century, and although up to the coming of the railways in the 1840s London had been considered a suitable subject for artists, attitudes changed and it was subsequently seen as crowded and unpleasant place. Instead artists looked to nature, not the conventions of the picturesque, but to the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood and the art critic John Ruskin who denigrated London as a blighted landscape and urged artists to 'go to nature trustingly, neglecting nothing and selecting nothing'. The Weald and St. Leonard's Forest clearly offered much to this new sensibility of the value of nature, combined as it was with a scientific realism and curiosity. Brandon writes that to the Victorians 'the Weald was a source of enrichment of life where geologists, botanists, painters, poets, architects

¹ Barnard, J. (ed.) (1973) *John Keats, The Complete Poems*, London: Penguin Books Ltd., p. 57.

and landscape gardeners found their various raw materials'. This new appreciation of natural forest landscape feeds into the demand for estates in areas such as St. Leonard's Forest, as can be seen in the following chapter on Victorian and Edwardian reappraisal of the Forest landscape.²

This chapter begins by setting the context of disturbance and poverty in the local community and then moves on to consider the Forest estates, that is, the development over this period of five of the Forest private estates. These are Holmbush and Buchan Park in the north, New Lodge and Coolhurst in the centre and west of the Forest, and Leonardslee in the south. Holmbush, Coolhurst and Leonardslee, in particular, impacted on the landscape through their owners' interest in creating gardens and pleasure parks for status and entertaining. The exciting developments in exploration and scientific enquiry of the Victorian age also impacted on these estates. Gwynne suggests that the scientific study of palaeontology began in the adjacent forest of Tilgate in 1822 when Dr Gideon Mantell and his wife discovered fossil remains of a dinosaur he named the 'iguanodon'. Owners in St. Leonard's Forest such as Charles Robert Scrase-Dickins at Coolhurst and Sir Edmund Loder at Leonardslee, exercised great skill in hybridising and experimenting with the growing and maintenance of new introductions of plants from the Americas, the Empire and Asia. The chapter therefore ends with a consideration of how changing gardening fashions and planting ideas were adopted by the Forest estates, and the impact of this on the landscape of St. Leonard's Forest.³

The 1830s witnessed a particularly troubled time in the south of England. The poverty of the labouring classes and the fear of real starvation amongst the agricultural

² Brandon, P. (1984) Wealden Nature and the Role of London in the nineteenth century artistic imagination, *Journal of Historical Geography*, **10.1**, pp. 75-104.

³ Gwynne, P. (1990) *A History of Crawley*, Chichester: Phillimore and Co. Ltd., p. 113 (hereafter Gwynne, 1990) and Brandon, P. (2003) *The Kent and Sussex Weald*, Chichester: Phillimore and Co. Ltd., p. 2 (hereafter Brandon, 2003).

labourers contributed to the Swing Riots across southern and eastern England at the start of the decade. Griffin noted that with the commons enclosed and machinery reducing the ability of the poor to glean wheat, common and customary rights in the south were in long term decline. He wrote that non-wage and poor relief income declined in 'absolute and proportional terms' in the late 18th century and early 19th century in southern England, and this was coupled with steadily declining real wages. Matthews wrote that the Swing Riots were 'rural class warfare on an epic scale', and there is no doubt, as Griffin notes, that there were tensions between capital and labour, although he saw the labourers' demands as modest and traditional in their relationship with capital. Griffin also notes that in the 1820s Cobbett began to predict a major rural rebellion and by 1829 even the *Brighton Gazette* was predicting that 'the evil day is not too distant'. The weather had added to the labourers' distress with prolonged rain causing disastrous harvests in 1828 and 1829, followed by a very cold winter lasting through until the spring of 1830. Not only was the availability of work restricted, food and fuel prices rose with the demand for increasingly scarce resources.⁴

The riots touched Horsham in the winter of 1830, when on the 18th November a mob of about 1500 agricultural labourers from the town and the surrounding villages marched on the Parish Vestry meeting held at St. Mary's church. Under the threat of violence concessions to increase wages were made, and a meeting promised for the following Monday in order to petition Parliament. The Magistrates were not unsympathetic, although concessions regarding rents and tithes were hard won from local MP Robert Hurst. Further difficulties were made for the Magistrates as 59 of the 65 townspeople summoned to act as Special Constables refused to do so. Perhaps this was not surprising given the threat of violence, or perhaps they supported the radical cause, in any case troops were called in.⁵

⁴ Matthews, M. (2006) *Captain Swing in Sussex and Kent, rural rebellion in 1830*. Hastings: The Hastings Press, p. 1, and Griffin, C.J. (2012) *The Rural War, Captain Swing and the Politics of Protest*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 44-9, 67, 324 (hereafter Griffin, 2012).

⁵ Albery W. (1947) *A Millennium of Facts in the History of Horsham and Sussex 947 – 1947*, Brighton: Southern Publishing, pp. 543-586. (hereafter Albury, 1947).

Hobsbawm and Rudé described Horsham as a 'lively centre of radicalism' and like other Sussex market towns with a population of many craftsmen and dissenters, the town took the initiative as much as the rural areas.⁶ Poverty caused by unemployment, low wages and excessive taxes was the underlying reason for restlessness and riot. These conditions contributed to the growth of local radical politics which criticised the established church and local government, calling for radical reforms, which was eventually recognised by Parliament. A new Whig government brought in the much needed Parliamentary Reform Act in 1832, the Poor Law Amendment Act in 1834 and the Tithe Commutation Act in 1836. The New Poor Law removed outdoor relief which it was thought had been abused by well-off farmers, and replaced it with the 'workhouse test', a harsh regime which was meant to deter shirkers and support the deserving poor from the fear of starvation. Ironically, this had the effect of depressing further the level of wages, as labourers would take any work however lowly paid rather than enter the workhouse. To comply with the new laws a new workhouse was built in north Horsham in 1838-9 to take poor from the 10 surrounding parishes, including Lower Beeding and the Forest.⁷

5.1: The Forest Estates

a) Holmbush and Buchan Hill

Thomas Broadwood (1786-1861) who bought the Holmbush estate in 1824/5 was the third generation of piano manufacturers, John Broadwood & Sons, whose manufacturing site was based in Horseferry Road, London.⁸ It was a very successful company supplying their own upright and grand pianos both here and abroad. By 1840 the company was said to be one of 12 largest employers of labour in London producing

⁶ Hobsbawm, E. & Rudé, G. (1969, 2001) *Captain Swing*. London: Phoenix Press, pp. 112-3.

⁷ Weir-Wilson, M. (2008) Horsham Union Workhouse 1838-9, The Decision to Build and its early establishment. *Horsham Heritage* Issue No. **17**, pp. 35-51.

⁸ References vary as to when Thomas Broadwood actually bought the estate, for example Pike and English Heritage give 1823 while Burke and Noel-Paton give 1824. Since the Peel letters (see chapter 3) show the estate was still up for sale in the summer of 1824, it seems likely that it was bought towards the end of 1824 or early 1825.

3000 pianos a year at its peak. As a young man, Broadwood had met Beethoven when visiting Vienna on a European tour, and wrote that Beethoven had played for him despite the fact that he was deaf and unwell. In 1818 Broadwood had sent him a gift of their newly improved triple stringed Broadwood piano, which was apparently later owned by Liszt, and is now in the National Museum of Budapest. It was said that other famous composers such as Chopin and Haydn all played on Broadwood pianos.

Thomas was a partner in the company with his elder step brother, James Shudi Broadwood who, while keeping a house in London, moved to Sussex in 1799 and bought Lyne Farm near Ruspur.⁹ Thomas followed his brother's example by keeping an existing property in London, and buying an additional country estate. He first purchased Juniper Hall near Dorking with 47 acres and a farm of 78 acres. The property had been auctioned in 1814 and he may well have been the purchaser at that time. Timbs wrote in 1822 that Broadwood was the owner of Juniper Hall and had designed and built a tower of flint near the summit of Box Hill probably as an observatory or 'prospect-room', and most likely 'suggested by the well-known tower on Leith Hill'.¹⁰

Thomas Broadwood sold Juniper Hall to a Miss Beardmore and on her death it was bought by F. Richardson.¹¹ In 1824-5 Broadwood bought the much larger Holmbush estate and employed the architect Francis Edwards to design his new mansion. Holmbush was a two storey castellated mansion with octagonal turrets, described by Horsfield somewhat damningly as 'domestic Gothic'. It stood high on the forest ridge and to the north the mansion looked over a rich valley towards Ruspur where his brother had his country retreat, and in the distance Box Hill in the Surrey Hills; perhaps

⁹ One sheet of notes and diagram of garden entitled *A Short History of Holmbush House* by Duncan Noel-Paton of Holmbush House, undated, distributed at Sussex Garden Trust visit on 14.5.2011. (hereafter Noel-Paton, 2011). Also Byrne, H. (2005) *The Broadwood Family and their local connections, Horsham Heritage*, Issue No. **13**, Autumn, pp. 29-39 (hereafter Byrne, 2005) and Mould, C. (2004) *Broadwood, Henry Fowler*, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, accessible through: www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk (hereafter Mould, 2004).

¹⁰ Timbs, J. (1822) *A Picturesque promenade round Dorking in Surrey*. London: John Warren, p. 12.

¹¹ J.S. Bright (1884) *A History of Dorking and Neighboring Parishes*, London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., p. 146.

Broadwood could see his Juniper Hall tower there. To the south was the back of the house, and with perhaps less of a prospect, the garden and the Forest. Early engravings (see figure 4.6) show a very large fountain in the garden behind the house which must have been an impressive feature. Burke noted that to the north of the house, in the kitchen garden, were the springs of the Arun River which drained south, and to the south of the house were the springs of the Mole River which ran north into Fox Hole Pond, and that there was no lack of water on the estate, one lake being of 50 acres and 3 more lakes plus ponds of a lesser extent. As has been noted in the Introduction to this study, the Forest was the watershed for these two important rivers, the Arun draining south and the Mole north. It can be confusing that Burke described the springs that fed the rivers rising in relation to the position of Holmbush House which is on a high point, although noting correctly that the river Arun drained south and the Mole to the north.¹²

Horsfield, writing in the 1830s, noted that the turnpike road from Horsham to Crawley, which had been of concern to possible purchasers of the estate due to its proximity to the old house, was moved further from the mansion to the bottom of the hill, having been funded and completed by Thomas Broadwood by employing Macadam. The estate, Horsfield wrote, was '3033 acres ringed by a fence; fir trees grow well and contrast with the glittering sheet of water that is the lake'. He praised Broadwood for the greatly improved landscape scenery and commented that 'the garden and pleasure grounds are judiciously laid out, and the various productions raised in the garden have gained notoriety at the different horticultural shows of the county. Dahlias of every variety are raised'.¹³ A native of Mexico, the first hybrid Dahlias had been introduced from France in 1815 and five years later they were the smart flower to have, along with geraniums and clematis. By 1839 there were more than 500 cultivars of dahlia and their popularity was beginning to wane, albeit that by the 1850s they were very

¹² Burke, B. (1852) *A visitation of the seats and arms of the noblemen and gentlemen of Great Britain and Ireland*. Vol. 1, London: Colburn, p. 24. (hereafter Burke, 1852).

¹³ Horsfield, T.W. (1835) *The History, Antiquities and Topography of the County of Sussex*, Vol. 2, Lewes: Sussex Press, p. 222 (hereafter Horsfield, 1835).

present in the autumn flower shows.¹⁴ Quest-Ritson noted that by 1875 there had been a revival of interest, and this is confirmed by Robinson, who, writing in the 1880s was enthusiastic about the many beautiful varieties of dahlia, and he noted that the newly introduced cactus and single varieties were, by then, taking over the shows.¹⁵

The Bewbush Tithing Map of 1841 encompasses Holmbush House and the eastern part of the estate (see figure 5.1).¹⁶ The mansion is seen set in one acre of garden including pathways from the back of the house and its eastern side. In front of the house between the turnpike and the house are three fields identified as park and meadow of 88 acres, with the pump and small ring of plantations and outbuildings. On the west side is a driveway down to the turnpike, with a garden and orchard near the mansion and nine acres of birch coppice. At the end of the drive by the turnpike is what is described as a toy cottage and garden, small pond, and orchard. On the other side of the drive is another cottage and garden which is more like the gate house. South of the mansion house and garden with fountain, the garden path runs around to the east in a large loop, past the ornamental lake, Rose Cottage with plantation and garden, and alongside a stream from Fox Hole Pond down to one acre of new buildings, tenements and yard at the turnpike.

¹⁴ Stuart, D. (1988) *The Garden Triumphant, A Victorian Legacy*. London: Viking, p. 162.

¹⁵ Robinson, W. (1883,1903) *English Flower Garden*. London: John Murray, pp. 512-6 (hereafter Robinson, 1883) and Quest-Ritson, C. (2003) *The English Garden, a Social History*. London: Penguin Books Ltd., p. 206 (hereafter Quest-Ritson, 2003).

¹⁶ The relationship of this Tithe map of the Parish of Upper Beeding (Detached) or Bewbush to the untithed forest, and the Tithe Commutation Act of 1834 will be explained in Chapter 6.



Figure 5.1: Lower Beeding (Bewbush Tithing) Map 1841, 26.6 in to 1 m., showing part of the Holmbush Estate. WSRO TD/W160.

The ornamental lake had a small island at the southern end and a 'cottage' which may well have been the boathouse. Between the lake and Fox Hole Pond are two arable fields of 11 and three acres each, but from the other side of the lake two wide rides cut through the Forest of 224 acres to plantations of 49 acres bordering Forest Road, the Horsham-Colgate-Pease Pottage road. This appears to be the extent of the pleasure grounds in the 1840s. According to the Tithe map, the estate also included the properties of Little Buckwood, Lower Baybush (Bewbush), The Hopper, Great and Upper Baybush. However, Kilnwood Farm with 173 acres to the north of the turnpike road to Crawley was not shown as owned by Thomas Broadwood at this point, although later appears to be part of the estate.

Burke, writing in the early 1850s appeared impressed with the pleasure grounds. He suggested that the soil was particularly suited to growing American trees and plants. He cited the avenues of spruce firs and rhododendron which were growing to an enormous size, and one particular rhododendron he noted had reached a spread of 120 feet (36.5 m).¹⁷ Quest-Ritson commented that the rhododendron became so fashionable towards the end of the 19th century that they became a mark of social respectability, and in fact the new wealth looking for a country residence would first check that the soil was suitable for the growing of rhododendrons before purchasing an estate.¹⁸ Burke wrote of the Holmbush estate that the combination of natural advantages and money, meant the pleasure gardens were exceedingly beautiful. Gardens and pleasure grounds at this time offered the chance for new money to enter society, to demonstrate taste and gardening skills, and not least the size of the owners' bank balance.¹⁹

Situated in the south of the Holmbush estate was the tower (see figure 5.2) which Hurst records was erected in the summer months of 1855-7 by a man named Sumner,

¹⁷ It should be noted that the genus rhododendron is a large one, and although most come from China and the Himalayan region, some azalea types come from the eastern and southern United States.

¹⁸ Quest-Ritson, 2003, p. 207.

¹⁹ Burke, 1852, p. 24.

his son and another man called Cox. She wrote that the stone was dug on the estate, prepared during the winter and laid by Sumner in the summer. It was 106 foot high (32.3 m) and built on the old site of the Napoleonic beacon, and when Hurst was writing about ten years later the tower was open to the public, for a fee, with a woman living at the bottom.²⁰ Later in the early 20th century it was lived in by the estate gardener and his family. The recollections of the gardener's son, were of a nine floor tower, from the top of which it was possible to see Crystal Palace on Sydenham Hill, London, and the south coast through the Shoreham Gap of the Adur valley.²¹ The Ordnance Survey map 1874 clearly shows the position of the tower at the end of one of the main rides through the Forest (see figure 5.3) labelled Beacon Hill and Holmbush Tower. Thomas Broadwood clearly enjoyed towers and the views they provided, as he had built his first flint tower at Box Hill, which is still standing today, unlike Holmbush Tower which was dismantled in 1943 after it became unsafe following the bombing of Colgate during the Second World War.

An examination of the OS 1876 6 inch to one mile map (see figure 5.3) and consultation of the accompanying Book of Reference to the Plan dated 1874, shows a considerable development of the pleasure gardens when compared to the previous 1841 Tithe map (see figure 5.1). It is striking how many more trees are indicated in the later map, and as mentioned in chapter 4, Burke noted that the owner had planted more than a million trees of larch, fir, oak, sweet chestnut and other varieties, which is well reflected in the later 1876 map.²²

²⁰ Hurst, D.E. (1868, 1889) *The History and Antiquities of Horsham*. Lewes: Farncombe & Co., p. 164, (hereafter Hurst, 1868).

²¹ Pers. Comm. Gordon Isted of Ifield, Crawley, 19.4.2009 (hereafter Pers. Comm., Isted).

²² Burke, 1852, p. 24.



Figure 5.2: Postcard in author's collection dated 21/12/1906 showing the Holmbush Tower on the Holmbush estate, taken from Faygate Road.

The looped path, clearly marked in the 1841 Tithe map, from the turnpike to Holmbush and around past the pond and Rose Cottage and back down to the turnpike, has been downgraded in the later map, and the link between Holmbush and Rose Cottage is filled with ornamental grounds and pasture. On the 1876 map the pond is called a fish pond with sluices, summer house and boat house (see figure 5.4). Paths lead from Holmbush House to the fish pond and south into 40 acres of woodland. There is a circular bed with a central point which may have been a statue or fountain, and what would appear to be a double circular ring of shrubs or flowers.



Figure 5.3: Holmbush mansion and estate, OS County Series 1: 2500 1st Edition, 1876, reproduced with permission of Edina Historic Digimap.

A short distance to the west, two wide and long rides from the house, are clearly indicated on the 1841 Tithe map, the most easterly being labelled Church Walk and leading directly to the back of St. Saviour's Church in Colgate which was not in fact established until 1871, ten years after Thomas Broadwood's death. However, it is suggested that it was built on the site of a small chapel which had been built by Thomas Broadwood for himself and his family, given that the nearest church at that time was either at Crawley or Horsham.²³ Girouard noted that in the larger country houses regular family prayers became popular during the Victorian era, with family chapels being built or the whole household assembling in the hall or dining room each morning for morning prayers. On Sundays the household walked through gardens or parks to the church, often 'newly built or restored at the pious expense of the owner of the house'. The family walked too, so that grooms and coachmen could observe Sundays by not working. One can imagine the Holmbush Church Walk serving exactly this purpose.²⁴



Figure 5.4: Postcard showing the fish pond and summer house on the Holmbush estate, date unknown, from West Sussex Record Office PH1095.

²³ Hudson T.P. (ed.) (1987) Churches, *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex* Vol. VI Pt. 3., The Institute of Historical Research by Oxford University Press, p. 27 (hereafter VCH Vol. VI.3).

²⁴ Girouard, M. (1978) *Life in the English Country House*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, p. 271.

Another wide ride which would have been further east and off the edge of the 1841 Tithe map runs from the house to Beacon Hill and Holmbush Tower, here a bench mark height of 482.3 feet above O.D. sea level is given at the entrance to the tower on the 1876 map. Situated directly south of the circle bed and on Church Walk is the meeting of five paths and a statue indicated in the middle. According to oral report this statue was known as the White Man, although this cannot be further confirmed and nothing more is known about this.²⁵ At the back of the house there are two clear enclosures of garden, gated from the parkland beyond. These appear to be woodland and lawn, the large fountain is still there but there are four small rectangular beds or tanks. However, to the west of the house is the stable block and beyond that a large two-acre plot identified as 'garden' with a tank, probably walled with glasshouses; this would be the kitchen garden of which Burke had said that an equal degree of attention had been bestowed on it as the pleasure gardens.²⁶

The three gates entering and exiting the gardens - the Blue, Green and the Stag Gates - were probably designed and built at the same time as the house and gardens were laid out and built by Francis Edwards for Broadwood. It is likely that the follies were also built in Broadwood's time, whether initially or later is not known. The follies follow Broadwood's interest in towers in that there is the square clock tower (see figure 5.5), the round summerhouse and the small tower folly at the edge of the more formal garden to the west of the house. All these are marked on the 1876 OS map but not labelled as such until 1976, when they can be followed back to 1876 by their shape and position.

²⁵ Pers.Comm. Isted. Checked with Mr Noel-Paton telephone call 16.3.2012, origin of statue not known but confirmed there were remaining plinths of other lost statues either side of the ride to the Blue Gate.

²⁶ Burke, 1852, p. 24.



Figure 5.5: Author's photograph of the square clock tower folly in the garden of the Holmbush estate, dated April 2009.

Thomas Broadwood was in the vanguard of wealthy London manufacturers and merchants who began to see value in the Sussex Weald, and who poured money in to create their country retreats. Others were to follow over the coming decades, estates were divided to enable smaller affordable country seats, landscape gardeners and architects were employed to recreate a tamed 'medieval' landscape. The Weald, and St. Leonard's Forest, was ideal for this purpose, being wild and picturesque with the desirable acid soils for rhododendrons and yet thanks to better communications via railways and roads, convenient to the new wealth, as either weekend retreats or as

comfortable family homes.²⁷ Byrne noted that the Broadwood family loved sport, and indulged in hunting, shooting and fishing on their properties, for which Holmbush was ideal with its long vistas and rides, and it was in fact promoted as a sporting estate in 1824 with an abundance of game.²⁸

Thomas Broadwood died in 1861 having done much to impose his idea of an ideal landscape on his part of St. Leonard's Forest, of which a surprising amount has survived into the 21st century. He had designed a park of avenues, towers, gates and statues, more structured than the parkland of Capability Brown and reminiscent of the early Italianate pleasure park and garden with elements of the picturesque in composition and scenic views. His estate was inherited by his eldest son from his first marriage, also called Thomas, but this Thomas moved to his uncle's house in Rusper, Lyne House, although he also spent most of his time on his yacht. The second son, John Jervis Broadwood moved to nearby Buchan Hill, to the east of the estate, and did much to improve the building but he did not live long and died in 1868. The piano business was inherited by Henry Fowler Broadwood who was the third son of James Shudi Broadwood, Thomas's half-brother and father of Lucy Ethelred Broadwood (1858-1929). Lucy lived at Lyne House and was a gifted pianist and singer in her own right. She travelled widely in England collecting folk songs in the field and contributed to the Folk Song Society founded in 1898. She was a friend and neighbour of the composer Ralph Vaughn Williams who grew up at Leith Hill Place in Surrey and in 1910 performed his *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* inspired by English folk songs. The Broadwood Morris Men established in 1972 honour Lucy Broadwood in their name and dance every May Day at Lyne House in her memory.²⁹ The Broadwood family sold Holmbush House and pleasure grounds, firstly unsuccessfully to a Mr Van-Agnew who was declared insane in 1864, and secondly with Buchan Hill, in 1868 to Colonel James

²⁷ Brandon, P. (2010) *The Discovery of Sussex*. Andover: Phillimore & Co Ltd., pp. 34-5, (hereafter Brandon, 2010).

²⁸ Byrne, 2005, p. 31.

²⁹ Information accessible through:
www.exploringsurreypast.org.uk/themes/people/musicians/lucy_broadwood and
www.broadwoodmorris.org.uk/history and Mould, 2004.

Clifton Brown (1841-1917), younger brother of Sir William Brown, and grandson of Sir William Brown, 1st Baronet, Liverpool banker and merchant.³⁰

Colonel Clifton Brown sold the Buchan Hill part of the estate of over 1000 acres to Philip F.R. Saillard, who built a new house on the site in 1882-3, designed by George and Peto (see figure 5.6). Saillard was born and educated in France and was a Liveryman of several city companies, master of makers of playing cards and merchant in Ostrich feathers. Lowerson noted that Saillard was proud of his origins and decorated part of the interior of his mansion with ostrich feather motifs in plaster.³¹ The *Sussex: Historical, Biographical and Pictorial* book published for subscribers in 1907 is effusive of Buchan Hill which it stated 'is situated amidst some of the most picturesque scenery which all Sussex can boast' and noted that since Mr Saillard had owned it he had proved 'how greatly natural beauties may be improved as the result of constant and careful attention and far-seeing expenditure'. It is clear from this quote that a considerable amount of new money was being poured into the Buchan estate. It appears that a chain of ponds was created from the north to the south of the estate, and an aviary for pheasants. The 1897 OS map shows the four named ponds, three with fish, and formal parterre gardens to the west of the house. A very large walled garden with beds and sheds or glasshouses, is shown plus another small fish pond. At least seven gardeners were employed on the estate, and Saillard appears to have achieved what many of the new wealthy London merchants and manufacturers were looking for, a country estate for status and relaxation.³²

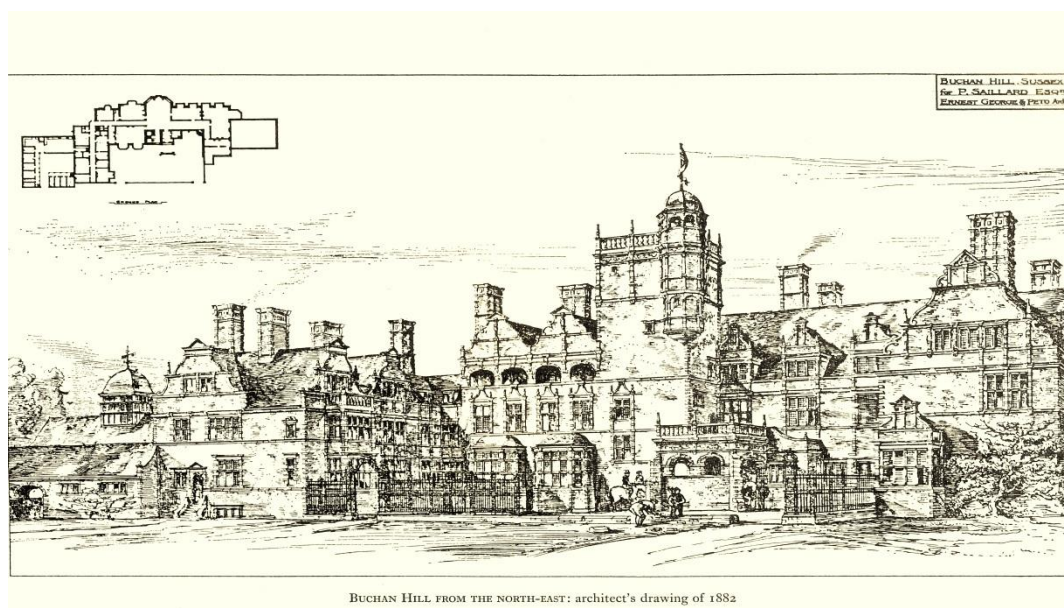
Saillard's landed wealth is also evident by looking at the Land Valuation Survey of 1910-15. This was a land valuation introduced by the Finance Act (1909-10) 1910 in Lloyd George's 'People's Budget' in order to raise taxes on the increase of land values

³⁰ Noel-Paton, 2011.

³¹ Pike, W.T. (ed.)(1910) *Sussex in the Twentieth Century, Contemporary Biographies*, Brighton: W.T. Pike, p. 294, and Lowerson, J. (1980) *A Short History of Sussex*, Folkestone: Wm Dawson & Sons Ltd., p 167.

³² Editor not identified (1907) *Sussex: Historical, Biographical and Pictorial*, London: Allen North, published only for subscribers, no pagination.

from a base in 1909 following a sale or other change of ownership, somewhat like a present day capital gains tax of 20% on land. The new tax was to raise revenue for social projects espoused by the 1906 Liberal government. Land ownership was still in the hands of the few, for example, an 1873 survey had found that in Sussex 25% of landowners held 97% of the land area. However, the legislation ran into considerable opposition and was repealed in 1920.³³



5.6: Reproduced illustration of Buchan Hill from the North East by the architects Ernest George and Peto, 1882, reproduced from VCH **6.3**, Lower Beeding, p. 20.

The field book which included Saillard's land holdings estimated the gross value to be £85,225, considerably more than Clifton Brown in Holmbush at £41,718 (although additional properties made this £57,366), Dennis in St. Leonard's Forest at £17,883 and Molyneux in The Grange at £30,527. The notes on Buchan Hill indicate considerable purchases after 1913 as the acreage is amended in red ink from 85 to 1170, although there is no amendment to the gross valuation. The original valuation of £85,225 was made up of buildings and structures £47,200, timber £10,000, fruit trees £500 and other things growing on the land, a catchall category, £5,000, with additional value for charges and restrictions of £225. A comprehensive sketch is given, not of the main

³³ Short, B., Reed, M., Caudwell, W. (1987) *The County of Sussex in 1910: Sources for a New Analysis. Sussex Archaeological Collections*, **125**, pp. 199-224, and Short, B. (1997) *Land and Society in Edwardian Britain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 9-37.

house but of outbuildings comprising three cottages, sawpits, cow stalls, stables, piggery, forge and looseboxes, all in a fair condition. Valued separately, but also owned by Saillard at this time was Bewbush House, or Manor House, buildings and land, again the original 195 acres have been amended in red ink to 215 acres, with six cottages. All these buildings were described as in very fair condition and consist of a large eight bedroomed house of cement, stone and tile with a dairy and cow stall for 50 cows, stabling, piggeries, calf pen and a large barn, total gross value was £7,525. Saillard is noted as the owner and occupier although he was also noted as the owner and occupier of Buchan Hill. An amendment in red ink for Bewbush House appears to say 'was occupier' but is difficult to decipher.³⁴

The Land Valuation Survey plan covering the parish of Lower Beeding shows Holmbush as number one on the map with 11 parts, so land ownership by Clifton Brown was quite widely spread to the north of Colgate. The main mansion of Holmbush was described as built of stone and slate, with numerous rooms for the family and their servants, a coach house, stabling, two cottages and a hovel, glass houses and potting sheds with 942 acres. The whole came to a gross value of £41,718 which was itemised as £14,875 for buildings and structures, £100 for machinery, £12,000 for timber, £300 for fruit trees and £1000 for other things, deducted from this was £12,225 if divested of the certain items and £1218 for land tax and restrictions. The value of the timber is striking and reflects the amount of mature woodland on the estate, as with Bewbush and Buchan Hill, the value of the timber in the north of the Forest was greater than in the middle or south of the Forest. Also estimated with this first valuation was woodland of 614 acres, a gravel pit, water and sporting rights over 27 acres.

Other properties recorded as owned by Clifton Brown as part of the estate are Rose Cottage, described as a dairy with one acre and occupied by David Gibson, rental is not recorded. The 1911 census records David Gibson as the farm bailiff, 46 years old living with his 34 year old wife, Mary and five children. The building is described as having a

³⁴ The National Archives (TNA) IR 124/9/114 and IR 58/94087.

kitchen, scullery, two bedrooms, attic, two reception rooms, dairy and stalls, stable, coach house and woodshed, its value being included with the main house. The field notebook shows an S. Jupp occupying Home Farm and smithy. The other building identified as Home Farm in the field book with 156 acres and three cottages were on a yearly rental to W.A. Jolliffe for £125. There was Holm Farm occupied by Frederick Crook, a farmer in his own right, which according to the field book appears to be a reasonably sized farm with a brick and slate house. Black Hill House was also separately assessed, with 26 acres it was rented out yearly and comments in the field book noted that in 1904 this was to E.E. Constable for £54 10s per year and the whole valued at £1000. Next was Upper Bewbush Farm with land of 101 acres, later amended to 99 acres and rented yearly for £43 by J. Brooker from 1899. The earlier 1901 census showed Jesse Brooker as a 47 year old farmer on his own account, living with his wife of the same age, Mary, and their 12 children, eight sons and four daughters aged from 22 to two, with the eldest six appearing to work on the farm with their parents. Of necessity it was a large farmhouse with six bedrooms, gross value £1800.

Finally, in the portfolio of Clifton Brown properties are Kilnwood Farm and Kilnwood House. The brick and tile farm house of Kilnwood farm had two reception rooms, kitchen, larder, four bedrooms, boxroom and lavatory. There were cow stalls for 24 cows, an eight stall stable, piggery, barn, cart shed and hovels. The house and two cottages with 195 acres, amended from 131 acres were rented yearly to Edward Barnes at £85 per year and the gross value was estimated to be £3,390. A sketch map indicated that the condition was mainly good. *Kelly's Directory of Sussex 1911* shows the Barnes as a large farming family. Frank and Albert are noted as farmers and Philip and Ernest are noted as poultry farmers at New Barn.

The field book details on Kilnwood House show a brick and part tile, part slate, house of a good size for a middle class family. It contained a library, smoking room, drawing room, telephone room, dining room, five bedroom and two dressing rooms, nursery, four servants' rooms with their own hall, pantry and scullery. Outside there was a

loosebox, and one stall, electric light generator, motor garage, glass houses, cottage and potting shed. According to a note attached to the field note book this house was furnished with shooting rights over 700 acres. The gross value was £5200 and although the estimate of rental is £200 per year, no person is identified and the 1901 census has just the butler, two housemaids and a footman in residence, with coachman, groom and gardener in the stables; however in the 1911 census it appears to be occupied by a Mr W.M. Scott and this is confirmed by *Kelly's Directory of Sussex 1911* which shows William Marten Scott living at Kilnwood.³⁵

The OS 1913 map confirms (see figure 5.7) that Clifton Brown kept Broadwood's basic design for the gardens, although the circle bed and statue in the 5 ways appear less prominent. Writing in 1905, Goodliffe comments on Holmbush Tower, adjoining a tiny lodge at the entrance to the grounds of Clifton Brown's 'beautiful residence'. Having made the steep ascent of the tower he is repaid with a magnificent panorama and wrote that a finer view from the vantage point among the many trees of the Forest could not be found elsewhere the country.³⁶ A postcard dated from 1906 shows the tower much as Goodliffe would have seen it, just near the side of the road to Faygate from Colgate, (see figure 5.2). The development of this road, known as Tower Road, is clear on the 1913 map, with the entrance to the Holmbush Tower as well as that of the Blue Gate lodge clearly marked, this latter being only an unnamed gate on the previous 1876 map. The fountain at the back of the house is no longer marked and had presumably gone by this time, in later modern maps there is a curious set of tiers, or terracing on the back lawn which Noel-Paton believes to be Victorian due to photographs in his possession, however they are not indicated in maps of the time. The kitchen garden appears less developed than previously, although the garden enclosure appears similar with fewer trees indicated. A very clear development is to the front of the house, between the house and the Horsham-Crawley road, and that is a cricket ground and pavilion.

³⁵ TNA IR 124/9/113 and IR 58/94086 and Kelly's Directories accessible through: www.historicaldirectories.org

³⁶ Goodliffe, W. (1905) *Horsham and St. Leonard's Forest with their Surroundings*. London: The Homeland Association, p. 54 (hereafter Goodliffe, 1905).

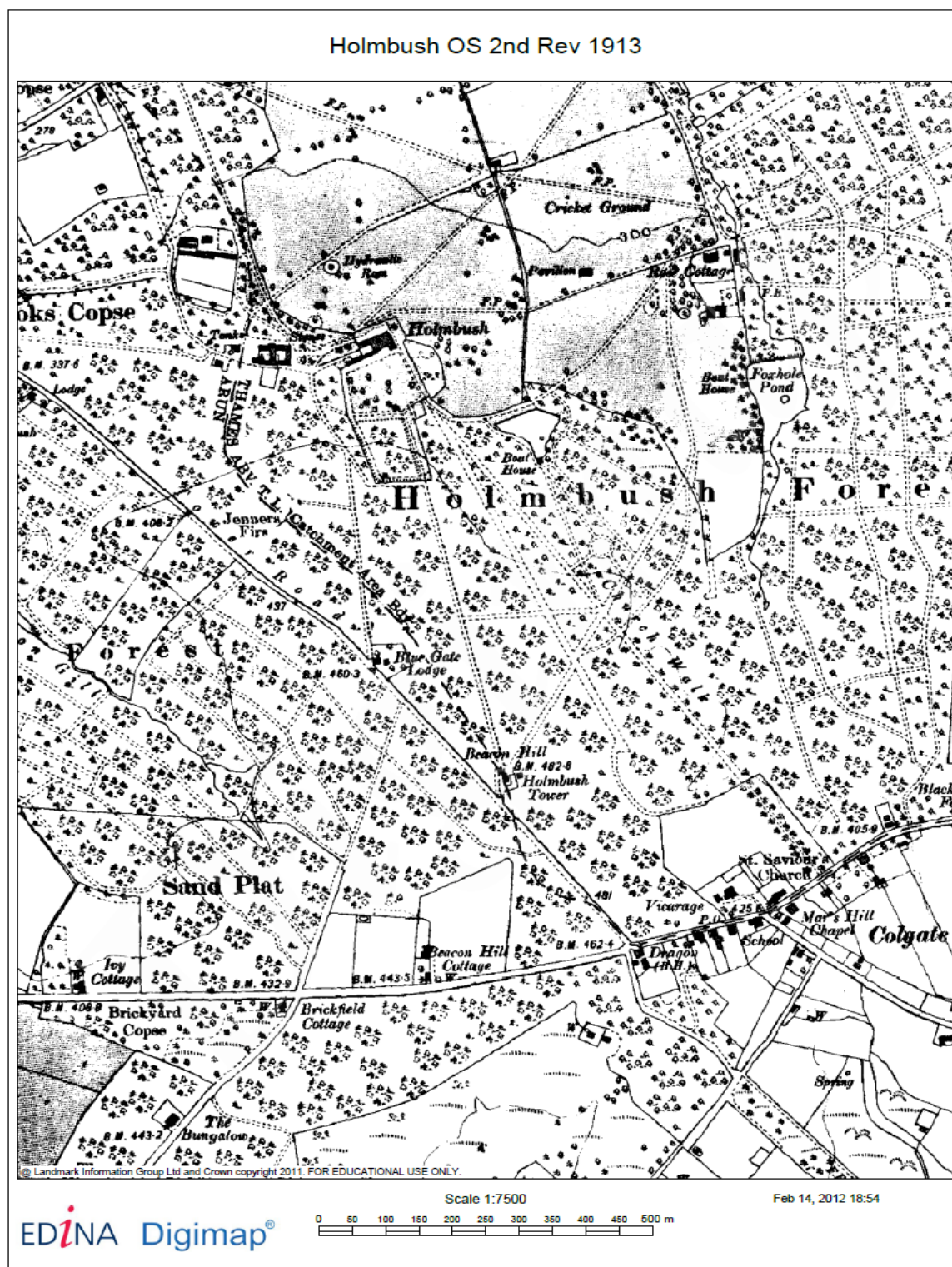


Figure 5.7: Later map of the Holmbush mansion and estate, OS County Series 1:10560, 2nd Revision, 1913, reproduced with permission of Edina Historic Digimap.

Noel-Paton wrote that the very striking Stag gates were embellished with the two stag sculptures, cast from zinc alloy by Joseph Winn Fiske at his ornamental ironworks in Chicago and imported by James Clifton Brown for his gates from the garden into the parkland or Forest (see figure 5.8).³⁷ These were set on the original pillars of the gates and follow a hunting theme. James Clifton Brown does appear to have lived the life of a country gentleman at his Holmbush estate. He and his wife, Amelia Rowe, brought up nine children there, five boys and four girls, a sixth boy died. He was the Liberal MP for Horsham from 1876-1880, and served as Lieutenant-Colonel of the 1st Lancashire Royal Garrison Artillery and after retirement was given the title of honorary Colonel of the 2nd brigade Lancashire Division. In 1888 he was appointed High Sheriff of Sussex and served as a Justice of the Peace. Both he and his wife were great advocates for homeopathy, giving talks in support of it and sponsoring the Homeopathic Convalescent Home in Eastbourne and the London Homeopathic Hospital.³⁸



Figure 5.8: Author's photograph of the stag gates, right hand side stag had been vandalised and is unlikely to be repaired, dated April 2009.

³⁷ Noel-Paton, 2011.

³⁸ Information accessible through: <http://sueyounghistories.com/archives>

Like Broadwood before him he was clearly a keen sportsman, from sailing to shooting. He was a regular visitor to Southsea in the 1890s when two of his yachts, the 'Argula' and 'Petrel', took part in races and regattas.³⁹ With regard to shooting he took estates in Scotland for the season as the *Dundee Courier* noted in 1885 that 'the extensive deer and grouse shootings of Tulchan, belonging to the Earl of Airlie, have been let for the coming season to Mr J.C. Brown of Holmbush, Horsham Sussex. The rent is between £1200 and £1500'.⁴⁰ The slaughter at these shoots was quite breathtaking by 21st century standards. The *Hampshire Telegraph* in its gossip column implied that in renting Erchless Castle in Invernesshire one could kill a considerable amount of wildlife: 'the Erchless bag last season, when Colonel Clifton-Brown had the place, comprised nearly eight hundred brace of grouse, thirty stags, nineteen woodcocks, nineteen roe deer, and nearly eight hundred head of miscellaneous game'.⁴¹

Hunting and shooting were clearly important to Clifton Brown and so it is not surprising he was attracted to Holmbush with its abundance of game, although perhaps this was decreasing, certainly the Black Grouse had gone. Noel-Paton wrote that after losing his seat as the Liberal MP for Horsham in 1880, he became a farmer on a large scale and a successful breeder of cattle and horses. James Clifton Brown died in 1917 and his estate passed to his eldest son Howard Clifton Brown whose eldest daughter, Elizabeth, married Edmund Calvert and it is their family who hold the estate today. Continuation of ownership has importance for the landscape, the rents from the farms and houses maintain an income for the landowner, and little change has occurred in the layout of the park and gardens, sales of land for development are however now beginning to change the wider estate landscape.⁴²

³⁹ *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* (Portsmouth) Jul 7 1894, Jun 19 1897 and Aug 1898.

⁴⁰ *Dundee Courier & Argus and Northern Warder* (Dundee) Feb 27 1885 issue 9862.

⁴¹ *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* (Portsmouth) April 20 1889 Issue 5627.

⁴² Noel-Paton, 2011.

b) New Lodge, also known as St. Leonard's

The St. Leonards estate, centred on the mansion of New Lodge, remained in the Aldridge family from 1760 to 1906, almost 150 years, but it began to be slowly eroded as large parts were leased and then sold off from the turn of the 19th century. As discussed in the previous chapter the estate was considered of poor quality soil, not fit for agricultural use, and the policy of the family, set out in a Trust, was to sell or lease land in order to provide annuities for the family. The first major sale, of approximately 1000 acres to the south of the estate, was to Charles George Beauclerk in 1803. Previously in 1801 the lease of 3000 acres to Railton and Hulls had been completed which opened the central area to subletting. In June 1837 The *Brighton Patriot* advertised for sale a 'valuable leasehold estate' of 68 acres in St. Leonard's Forest. This was described as '13 acres of meadow and pasture, the remainder woodland principally Birch and Alder, well adapted as a game preserve.'⁴³

Leasing and subletting continued through the 19th century, for example in 1862 Carter's Lodge and Newstead Farm, together with 782 acres, were leased, mortgaged, and a schedule of 14 subleases listed all with 20 and 21 year leases. In 1865 21 tenancies on this same land were noted, and some of these were to the same people as noted in the previous leases. Six of these names can be picked up in the 1871 census and it is interesting to note that one of these, Thomas Gent, settled on Tattletons Farm where seven other families were also settled including the family of Thomas Light, a pedlar, in a caravan on the farm with seven children, (see figure 5.9). Of the other families on this farm there were three agricultural labourers and four identified as farmers, with the acreage of their farms helpfully being noted as 25 acres, 20 acres, 11 acres and 9 acres, so quite small farms. Of the named lessees, Thomas Gent, 45, at Tattletons was an agricultural labourer, with seven children the eldest two boys, 16 and 17 also agricultural labourers. Thomas Agate was a gamekeeper with wife and small son at Grouse Road, William Gent was Thomas Gent's brother, both having been

⁴³ *Brighton Patriot and South of England Free Press* (Brighton, England) Tuesday, June 6, 1837, issue 120. This was a very radical paper which indicates left wing politics so perhaps Railton and Hulls were driven to issue numerous small leases through political ideology rather than financial gain.

born in Cudham, Kent, he was at Black Hill near Colgate, a sawyer with three children, his eldest a 16 year old being an agricultural labourer. Henry Etherton, 46, was an agricultural labourer at Barnsnap with a 16 year old son who was also an agricultural labourer and four other young children, likewise Christopher Jupp at Barnsnap was an agricultural labourer, his eldest son of 14 was an agricultural labourer and he had five other children. Most of these men and their wives came from the local area, except the Gents from Kent. As agricultural labourers and small farmers they would not have been well off and would have suffered in the subsequent agricultural depression that swept many of these workers off the land.⁴⁴

Further evidence of leasing and subletting was supplied by the 1867-8 Report on the Employment in Agriculture which looked at the Parish of Lower Beeding as part of the Union of Horsham. It noted that this was a 'wide scattered parish of 10,000 acres, sparsely peopled with 4000 acres of uncultivated and wood land.' Although the report wrote that the condition of the cottages in the south of the parish were deemed to be fair, in the north their condition was described as bad and overcrowded. As previously noted the report commented on the subletting of 3000 acres of St. Leonard's Forest in 1801 and how cottages and turf huts of a 'very inferior condition' were allowed to be built, and that about a dozen of these cottages still remained in 1867 in their original condition, which was clearly a worry for the Commissioners.⁴⁵ However, it is of note that the Chair of the local Commissioners who had been engaged for the report was E.M. Smith Bigg of The Hyde in the nearby Parish of Slaugham, who had also been involved in mortgaging, with the Strong family, 1950 acres of Carter's Lodge and Great Warren. It seems unlikely that he would not have known what was happening and the poor conditions of the cottages and huts.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ HM MSS 3132, 3135, 3138.

⁴⁵ House of Commons Parliamentary Papers (1867-8) *The First Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture*, pp. 81-2 (hereafter *Employment in Agriculture 1867-8*).

⁴⁶ HM MS 3124.1.

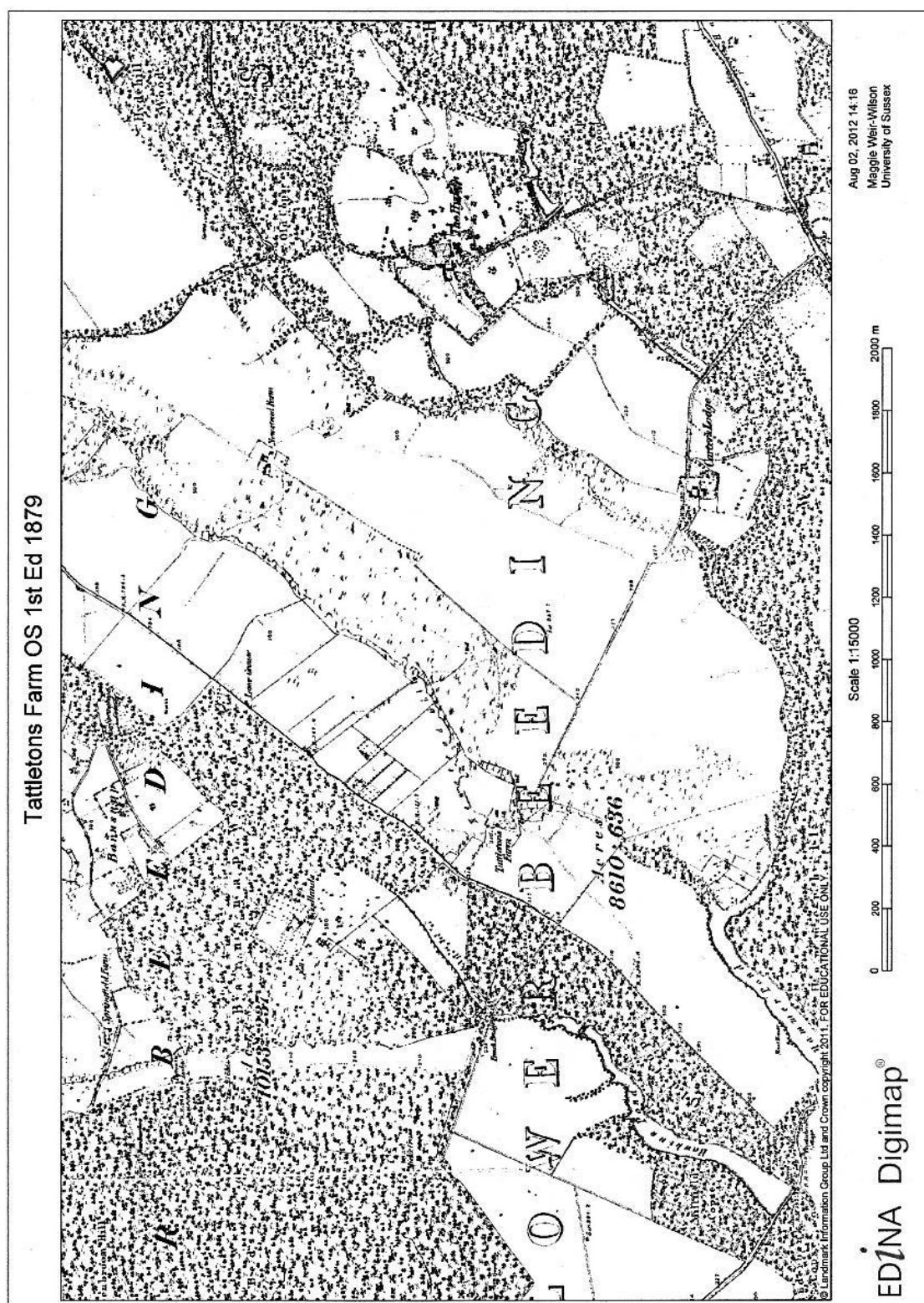


Figure 5.9: Tattletons Farm (between the B and E of Lower Beeding) with smallholdings running east west in the centre, Barnsnap to the north and Carter's Lodge to the south east. OS County Series 1:10560, 1st Edition, 1879, reproduced with permission of Edina Historic Digimap.

New Lodge was the original name of the mansion built by Abel Aldridge in the mid-18th century, possibly on the site of a previous lodge house as the name would suggest, however the name does change through the decades. Horsfield wrote that Robert Aldridge was the principal proprietor of St. Leonard's Forest and his residence was called St. Leonard's Forest.⁴⁷ Elwes, writing later, referred to the residence as St. Leonards and noted that it was sometimes called the New Lodge, and that it was sited in a park of 250 acres.⁴⁸

Gardner and Gream's Sussex map of 1795 (see figure 4.1) shows the site of New Lodge as a rectangular enclosure with paths radiating out over the Forest. This is still clear in the OS Old Series 1813 map although the main southern drive takes precedence and four meadows or fields to the south west have appeared (see figure 4.2). The OS 1st edition 1875 map (see figure 5.10) shows a modest footprint of the house, some large stables or barns to the north and between them the divided square of what looks like a walled garden or kitchen garden. The original rectangular enclosure is no longer delineated, but the house appears set in a lawn of mixed deciduous and conifer trees with a drive to the easterly front of the house, and a long avenue lined with trees running down to the south to meet Hammerpond Road. Hurst noted that the house was approached by an 'avenue of ancient Spanish Chestnuts and in the garden is one of the largest rhododendron plants known.' She also commented that the park which surrounded the house was noted for fine old Birch trees. Other features that can be seen on the 1875 map are two ponds immediately to the south of the mansion, to the south east an orchard and a Laurel Walk, with a small cottage called Turfplain Lodge to the south on an area called Turf Plain, which is shown wooded and cut through with a grid of paths in the later 1897 OS 1st Revision map.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Horsfield, T.W. (1835) *The History, Antiquities and Topography of the County of Sussex*. Vol. 2, Lewes: Sussex Press, p. 222 (hereafter Horsfield, 1835).

⁴⁸ Elwes, D.G.C. & Robinson, C.J. (1879) *A History of the Castles, Mansions and Manors of Western Sussex*. London: Longman, p. 27 (hereafter Elwes, 1879).

⁴⁹ Hurst 1868, pp. 148-9.



Figure 5.10: Map of New Lodge also known as St. Leonard's, OS County Series, 1:2500, 1st Edition, 1875, reproduced with permission of Edina Historic Digimap.

An interesting report comes from the Recollections of Henry Burstow who described how, as a boy, he watched the St. Leonard's Forest Races which occurred on Tuesday, September 15th, 1835. To illustrate his report he reproduced the programme of the races in good detail. He wrote that the course was one and a half miles in circumference and situated on the west side of the big house, New Lodge. By checking the OS 1st edition 1875 one can see a clear, almost circular, area of parkland of about one quarter of a mile in diameter from the house to the edge of the property and a band of trees. This area is not large enough to encompass such a large circular race track, although it may not have been circular or oval as today's race courses.⁵⁰

Burstow wrote that the first race meeting had been held the previous year in 1834 and was fairly small, but that the 1835 meeting was a 'grand event: early in the morning every approach to the Forest was crowded with vehicles of all kinds, and with people on foot and on horseback.' He added that by 10 in the morning when the first race was to start, it was estimated that 12,000 people and 1000 horses were present. To add to the festivities a Race Ball and supper were held in the evening at the Kings Head Hotel in Horsham. The following year the races had been fixed for 10th May but were postponed for a month due to the 'sudden and dangerous illness of Robert Aldridge' steward and owner of the park. However, it commenced on his recovery, and the *Hampshire Advertiser* reported that 'about 1500 persons were present. The company, on the whole, consisted of the most influential and wealthy in this part of the county'.⁵¹

These races were very popular and ran for seven years, and despite the 1836 meeting raising over £200 towards the building of a new church, St. John's at Coolhurst, just

⁵⁰ Albery, W. (ed.) (1975) *Reminiscences of Horsham being Recollections of Henry Burstow, The Celebrated Bellringer and Songsinger*, Norwood, Pa (USA): Norwood Editions, pp. 30-3, (hereafter Albery, 1975).

⁵¹ *The Hampshire Advertiser and Salisbury Guardian* (Southampton, England) Saturday 7 May 1836, Issue 668 and Saturday 18 June 1836, Issue 674.

beyond the southern edge of the estate, the local clergy were very against such 'betting, drinking and swindling.' So they complained to Robert Aldridge as to the presence at the races of 'so many undesirable characters, hawks and pigeons, sharps and flats, bounders, boozers and harpies of all sorts' which brought about its demise. Such crowds and horses would have had a detrimental impact on the parkland which could not have supported any ornamental garden into the 1840s, and there is little evidence of it later. However there is comment that Robert Aldridge did try to improve the estate by laying down tile drains, and this had more success than previous attempts by Sir Richard Weston to improve the soil.⁵²

There are hints of financial problems, or family disagreements amongst the Aldridge family as during the first attempt to sell the bulk of the estate in 1878, number six of the conditions of sale reported that on 21st February 1873 a bill was filed in the Court of Chancery in suit of Aldridge versus Aldridge. This apparently had been instituted for the purpose of obtaining legal consent to enable the Trustees to raise money for enlarging, repairing and improving the mansion. This was granted but no decree was made and the bill was dismissed in June 1875. Robert Aldridge had died in 1871 aged 69 and the estate was inherited by the eldest son of seven children, Major John Aldridge (1832-1888). As noted in Ellis, the parliamentary return of 1875 lists Major Aldridge as holding 5739 acres of land with a gross annual rental of £3164. In comparison with other landowners in Sussex who held over 1000 acres of land this was a very respectable acreage for someone not of the aristocracy, although a lower rental ratio to acreage probably reflected the poor quality of the arable land.⁵³

Major John Aldridge (1832-1888), later Colonel in the Royal Sussex Regiment (see figure 5.11), married the widow of Thomas Broadwood of Holmbush, Maria Althea Matthew and together they had four sons and one daughter. Colonel John Aldridge contested the Parliamentary seat of Horsham in 1868 and 1874, tying with Robert

⁵² Albery, 1975, pp. 30-3.

⁵³ Ellis, W.S. (1925) *The Parks and Forests of Sussex, Ancient and Modern*, Lewes: H. Wolff. p. 247 (hereafter Ellis, 1925).

Hurst and both taking their seats in the Commons after the first election until this was overturned, he lost to Hurst at the second election. However, he was on the Board of Guardians appointed to manage the running of the Horsham Union workhouse, and was one of the senior Magistrates of whom it was said 'His zeal was great to discharge the duties of a Magistrate, whilst at the same time he always strove to combine mercy with justice'.⁵⁴ All their sons were soldiers in the South African wars, and their eldest son, Robert Beauclerk Aldridge died unmarried in 1892 at the age of 27. Their second son, Charles Powlett Aldridge (1866-1907) Captain in the Royal Sussex Regiment for all of his adult life, made the major sale of the estate in 1896.⁵⁵ After his death in 1907 *Sussex Genealogies* shows that the inheritance of St. Leonard's Forest fell on the youngest son, John Bartelott Aldridge (1871-1909) who died at Bangalore in India aged 37, leaving three young sons aged nine, seven and four.⁵⁶ Of the previous generation, three uncles, brothers of Colonel John Aldridge, also died young. Robert Bartelott Aldridge (1835-1863) Henry Aldridge (1842-1876), and Charles Compton Aldridge (1839-1866) who was in Holy Orders.

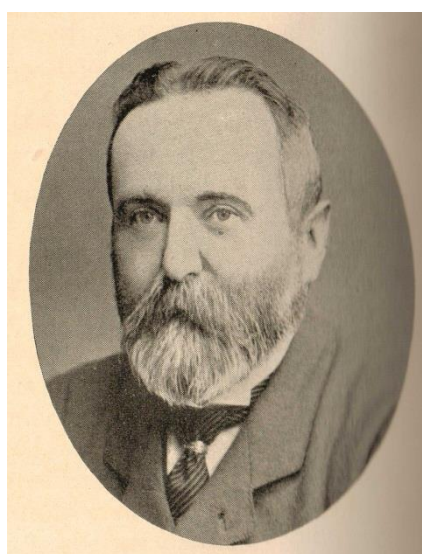


Figure 5.11: Photograph of Colonel John Aldridge 1868 reproduced from Albery's *Parliamentary History*, p. 287.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ From newspaper cutting in the archive of the Rev. Bloxham, Magdalen College, Oxford. MS 741.

⁵⁵ Boorman, D. & Djabri, S.C. (2009) Country House Cricket at St. Leonard's Forest. *Horsham Heritage*, Issue No. 18, Horsham Museum, pp. 46-59 (hereafter, Boorman and Djabri, 2009).

⁵⁶ Comber, J. (1931) *Sussex Genealogies (Horsham Centre)*. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd., pp. 8-12.

⁵⁷ Albery, W. (1927) *A Parliamentary History of Horsham 1295-1885*, London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., p. 287.

Thus in the latter part of the 19th century the Aldridge estate was beset by death and taxes. Although Colonel John Aldridge had improved the estate by building new properties and improving roads, he must have felt compelled to put a large part of the estate up for sale in 1878. Two years beforehand, the *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* noted that a military camp was to be formed in St. Leonard's Forest, the seat of Colonel Aldridge, however there is little evidence that this did actually happen.⁵⁸ However, 1878 was not a good time to sell, in the earlier part of the 19th century demand for land had been maintained by large landowners consolidating their holdings, and new wealth like Broadwood and Clifton Brown founding landed families with all the social position and political influence that brought. However, the Reform Acts took away automatic opportunities for political power, and so, as Thompson noted, by 1878 the landed aristocracy were at 'territorial saturation point'. To make matters worse for sellers there was an agricultural depression, rents were falling and there was no sign of them levelling out.⁵⁹

On Tuesday 30th July, 1878, 3400 acres of the St. Leonard's Forest Estate came up for auction in eight lots. The sales particulars give a very useful snapshot of the estate at this time. The position of the estate appeared to be an important selling point as it was noted that it was two miles from Horsham station with the advantage of two lines of railway into London. The sale was clearly aimed at those wanting to retreat from the expanding city of London, and there was no shortage of newly wealthy merchants and business people who wanted their own piece of the peace and quiet of Sussex. The sporting opportunities were also emphasised, such as in Lot 5 which included 900 acres surrounding Hammer and Hawkins Ponds and other 'ornamental sheets of water of great extent, affording capital fishing, boating and water fowl shooting'. The whole estate, it was noted, 'presents a magnificent sporting property'. In addition, opportunities for building were made clear, not only were there resources for building on site due to 'valuable quarries of stone, good building sand, and excellent brick earth on the estate also good gravel for roads', but suitable sites for development were

⁵⁸ *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, Saturday 27 May 1876.

⁵⁹ Thompson, F.M.L. (1968) *The Land Market in the Nineteenth Century*, Minchinton, W. E. (ed.) *Essays in Agrarian History*, Vol. II, Newton Abbot: David & Charles, pp. 50-4.

suggested. It was reported that care had been taken with the division of lots to present 'beautiful sites for the erection of superior residences.... with frontage to the capital roads. Finally, the picturesque nature of the estate was emphasised as it was described as having 'some of the most charming views in the county' and that the hills and valleys over the whole four mile length of the estate presented sites for building. The sales particulars do confirm that for some years the owner, Colonel John Aldridge, had made improvements, both by ornamental planting, drainage, fencing and the building of roads. This can be further confirmed by enclosure orders in 1869, 1871 and 1878 awarded to John Aldridge for land drainage, improvement and road building thus making the estate more productive and accessible. Mingay writes that it was only after the mid-19th century with steam power and the invention of cheap ways of making pipes and tiles that large scale under-drainage could take place, but it was one of the most important improvements to agricultural production.⁶⁰

In examining the details of the eight lots for sale it is possible to come to some conclusion about the character of the central part of the Forest at this time. There are 19 properties identified as farms, although one called Monks Gate is clearly not, given the small acreage and lack of farm facilities, so it is not included in the present author's calculations, but another two properties clearly are, Plummer's Plain House and Woodlands, so they have been included in this brief analysis. Of the 20 farms thus identified, six are above 100 acres. The largest, Dockers Lodge Farm, has 311 acres and the smallest, Woodlands, has 115 acres. The 14 farms below 100 acres have between 22 and 89 acres each. An approximation of the acreage of the farms from a total of the estate of 3400 is about 2136, or just under two thirds.

Although one cannot be sure that all the animals and buildings are accounted for in the sales particulars, there is a good indication that they were all small mixed farms. For example, of the six larger farms all had horses, and all but one had cattle, four had pigs

⁶⁰ HM SP203, and McGaw Collection MSS 3293, 3294, 3295 and Mingay, G.E. (1968) *The Agricultural Revolution in English History: A Reconsideration*, Minchinton, W.E. (ed.) *Essays in Agrarian History*, Vol. II, Newton Abbot: David and Charles, pp. 10-22.

and four had chickens, two had dairies and only one had a bake house, or a brew house or an orchard. Of the 14 smaller farms, 11 had horses, 10 had cattle, nine had pigs, two had chickens, and one had pheasants. Altogether there were two dairies and six orchards. Stabling for 18 horses within all the farms can be identified although there may have been more given that horses would have been used for transport as well as for the plough. This gives a picture of a busy farming area around the edges of the Forest, with animals, people and associated buildings.

Taking only the acreage in the calculation of the six larger farms it is indicated that about 80% of farm acreage was in arable cultivation, 18% in pasture, grass and rough pasture, and just 2% was woodland. A similar calculation for the smaller farms produces almost the same result, 75% arable, 22% pasture including orchards, and 3% wood. It is not explicit what is grown in the arable fields but several farms have granaries, often above stables, which would indicate wheat and/or oats for the horses. Also there is mention of water from Hawkins and Hammer ponds being let for Mill purposes to a yearly tenant, which would also indicate wheat being grown and milled for flour. However, with the number of cattle being kept the arable could also be for root crops and cattle feed. It does appear to be a particularly high proportion of arable given that land use crops for Sussex as a whole taken from tithe reports circa 1836 give figures of 43.8% arable, 34.9% grass, 15.1% wood and 2.8% common. It was noted in these reports that on clay soils a four course rotation was grown of wheat, oats, seeds and fallow, either tares or beans. On the better loams turnips were grown, while on the lightest poorest soils seeds were allowed to lie for two or three years.⁶¹ It could be that the sales particulars exaggerated the amount of land under arable cultivation, or that it was later reduced as yields reduced on poor soil despite attempts by Col John Aldridge to drain, enclose and improve the land. Deputations from the 1901 Footpath Dispute tend to indicate a reduction in the number of small farms (see Chapter 6).

⁶¹ Kain, R.J.P. (1986) *An Atlas and Index of the Tithe Files of Mid-nineteenth century England and Wales*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 102-111.

Apart from the farms there were a number of cottages, tenements and larger residences included in the estate sale, in fact most of Lower Beeding and Colgate villages were included, plus a new road with a strip of houses or plots south of Colgate. Eleven newly erected properties were described, these included five cottages, two farmhouses, and two residences plus two sites of farm buildings. These represented a significant capital outlay if paid for, or mortgaged, by Colonel John Aldridge.

The farms had a small percentage of woodland, between two and three percent, there was still enough to promote some parts of the estate as good for shooting. This is confirmed by what seems to be a business carried out by John Boyd. The new cottage by Holy Trinity Church in Lower Beeding was let to him annually and he had sporting rights over five acres of Holme plantation woods. Boyd was also named as renting the Pheasantry at Buckshead Farm and had shooting and fishing rights over 425 acres of mainly woodland in the centre of the estate such as Race Hill, Barnsnap and Cinderbank. Another 243 acres of woods to the north of the Horsham-Colgate-Pease Pottage road, and to the west of Tower Road in Lot 7 was again let to him on a yearly notice. One would therefore assume that John Boyd ran and stocked shoots over 673 acres of woodland in St. Leonard's Forest at this time.⁶²

It appears that little was sold in this sale, or perhaps much was withdrawn, as most of the property came back onto the market three years later. It may have been, as suggested earlier, that it was a particularly poor time to sell land in 1878. Colonel John Aldridge put it up for sale again on 13th July, 1881, this time in 56 lots and including other land he possessed in Warnham and Roffey, making the whole of 3200 acres. Demand for land did not pick up until the early 1890s, however despite demand still being slow in the 1880s, this time the estate did sell. Knight commented that this was one of the largest land transactions carried out in Horsham's modern history, and echoes *The County Times* report three days after the auction that it was the largest and

⁶² HM MS SP203.

most important sale of land that had taken place in Sussex for some years.⁶³ The amount of money raised by the sale from the 56 lots amounted to £35,000 and the individual lots varied according to acreage and buildings. For example, the most expensive was the newly built residence of Woodlands, along with Lower Grouse Farm with its newly erected cottage and numerous tenements, altogether about 200 acres, which sold for £6500. On the cheaper end were four new cottages in Colgate which sold for a total of £145 and small plots of building ground in Colgate from 10 shillings to £50, £70, £77 and £100. The Dragon Public House in Colgate sold for £120 and the brickyard with five acres, a good cottage, extensive shed and good supply of brick earth sold for £530.⁶⁴

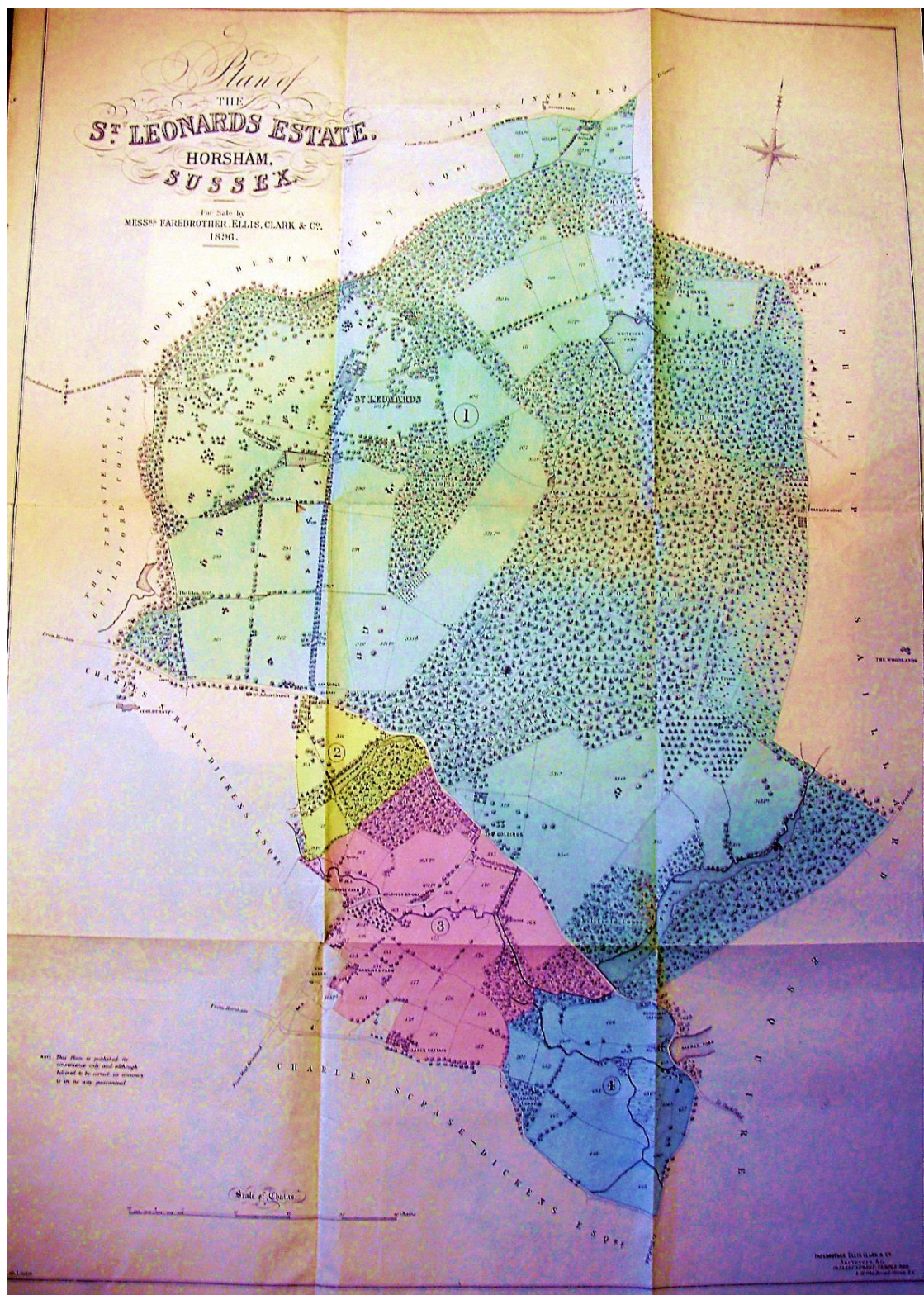
The newly wealthy were acknowledging the ‘very exceptional advantages for the erection of a residence of a high character’ outside of London, and yet within easy commuting distance, much as they would today.⁶⁵ Brandon suggested that for the generation of John Ruskin and William Morris, the Weald was a surviving medieval landscape with its ‘close-set fields, crumbling manor houses, lichened castles, ivy-covered churches’. This view contributed to the revival of handicrafts and attention to the vernacular architecture and the garden, or parkland, setting of domestic buildings, particularly in south-east England, within reach of London.⁶⁶ Quest-Ritson cited economic and political changes that impacted large landowners at the end of the 19th century, such as the depression of agricultural rents and prices, new taxation and death duties. He noted that spending thus passed to the newly rich and that most of the major gardens of the 20th century were made by people who bought land in the depressed years from 1885 to 1925. The newly wealthy certainly looked to the Sussex Weald and bought up property around Horsham, such as the Messels at Nymans, the

⁶³ Knight, J. (2008) *Horsham's History Volume 3 1880 to 1913*. Horsham: Horsham District Council, pp. 24-6 (hereafter Knight, 2008).

⁶⁴ HM MS SP218.

⁶⁵ HM MS SP218.

⁶⁶ Brandon, 2010, pp. 34-5, 141-4.



Godmans at South Lodge, the Loders at High Beeches and Leonardslee, and the Millais at Comptons Brow.⁶⁷

The remaining mansion and the surrounding park of St. Leonard's estate amounting to 1731 acres was put up for sale on 16 July 1896 in four lots (see figure 5.12). This sale was triggered by two unexpected deaths, that of Colonel John Aldridge at the age of 57 in 1888 who was 'seized with a fit' after addressing the Board of Guardians.⁶⁸ The second unexpected death was that of his eldest son, Robert Beauclerk Aldridge at the age of 27 in 1892. Although death duties were not enacted until two years later in 1894, there would still be estate duties to pay and this would have been a burden on the family's finances.

In this 1896 sale, the first lot was the largest section of 1422 acres which was described in the sales particulars as 'a charmingly rural and particularly attractive freehold residential and sporting estate.... only one mile from the pleasant country town of Horsham'. Railway links to the City and West End in under an hour were emphasised plus links to the south coast towns and north to Guildford and the south west.

The particulars praised the lovely sylvan views, and noted that the estate was within walking or riding distance of a number of other gentlemen's estates, which was important for the socially ambitious. The very exceptional sporting amenities were noted and the extensive woodland of 800 acres were said to be well suited to a large herd of game. To further entice the hunter it was noted that the estate fell within the area patronised by the Crawley and Horsham Hunt, and there were two other meets of foxhounds and staghounds locally. A map of the hunts was provided with the sales particulars to further emphasise this advantage. In addition, other sporting facilities were listed, fishing, boating and wildfowl shooting on the lakes, plus for 'those fond of

⁶⁷ Quest-Ritson, 2003, pp. 220-3.

⁶⁸ From two newspaper cuttings in the archive of Rev. Bloxham, Magdalen College, Oxford. MS 741.

the now fashionable game of golf' the park offered a 'natural golf links'. The new owner of The Grange and the eastern part of the estate, Edward Molyneux, did in fact establish a golf course at Mannings Heath to the south east of the estate, which is still popular today.⁶⁹

The sales particulars show that in the main house there were 16 bedrooms, including those of the servants, a drawing room, panelled boudoir, dining room library and study. The domestic offices included butler's pantry and bedroom, servants' hall, kitchen scullery, housekeeper's room, store room, larder and lamp room. In the basement were two wine cellars, two beer cellars and a furnace room. The outhouses consisted of a game larder, knife room, coal house, oil store, two wood houses, workshop and two servants' toilets. Stabling was to the rear of the house, and comprised a four stall stable, a loose box with loft, harness room, groom's room, three more loose boxes and a large coach house. Apart from the pleasure grounds of lawn, rhododendrons, cedars and other specimen trees, the rose garden, laurel walk woodland and two tennis lawns, there was a walled kitchen garden with fruit trees and a large range of glasshouses within the walls. The glasshouses consisted of a vinery and a heated conservatory and peach house. Nearby was a mushroom house, orchard house, a gardeners' yard and store room, potting shed and tool shed. Two modern stone built cottages were also nearby for the coachman and gardener.

Although this appears to be a fairly comprehensive list of assets for a working estate, there was more at the Home Farmstead, which the sales particulars noted were 'fully adapted to the requirements of a gentleman fond of farming' and it is interesting to see the beginnings of mechanisation through use of steam power on the farm. There were four yards, a complete dairy, fully tiled, wash room with hot and cold water and two good cottages. There was the Bailiff's house with gardens, more stock yards and sheds. There was an estate timber yard with carpenters and painters shops,

⁶⁹ Edward Molyneux is referred to in the Court of Chancery during the 1901 Footpath Dispute as Edward, but in other archival evidence such as the Land Valuation Survey 1910-15 as Edmund Molyneux.

blacksmith's forge, saw pit and shed, steam sawing shed, portable engine adjoining a machinery house on two floors which housed a beanmill, root pulper, chaff cutter and cake breaker, all worked from the steam engine. A food steaming apparatus was listed which one could assume was for cattle feed. There were two more cottages and a bake house, also a laundry in the centre of the estate with garden, orchard and woodland, and a good drying ground. Inside was an ironing room, a Benham's drying closet and an ironing store, wash room with large copper washing bins and rinsing tub.⁷⁰ Finally are listed dog kennels, brick and enclosed runs, a chicken house and pheasantry in three divisions, a Keepers cottage with garden and orchard.

Included in this sale in Lot 1 was The Grange, garden and park making up 17 acres but let for life to the elderly Mrs Aldridge. Although she does not appear on the 1901 census, her four female servants do, the cook, parlour maid, house maid and a 17 year old kitchen maid. The Grange had probably been built in the mid-19th century, close to the main mansion, as a dower house for single female members of the Aldridge family. Mary Alethea Aldridge, widow of Colonel John Aldridge, died there in 1908 at the age of 80, having seen all of the Aldridge lands sold, the final tranche in 1906. When he bought the estate from Molyneux, McGaw rebuilt the Grange in a Jacobean style, he renamed it, somewhat confusingly, St. Leonard's Forest, and lived there rather than the old St. Leonard's mansion.⁷¹

The whole estate, all four lots, which amounted to 1731 acres was bought by Edward Molyneux. It was recorded in Court during the Footpath Dispute hearing that the plaintiff, Edward Molyneux was the owner in fee and was in possession of the St. Leonard's Estate comprising over 1731 acres in the parishes of Lower Beeding,

⁷⁰ John Lee Benham (1785-1864) set up as a furnishing ironmonger in 1817. The company moved to Wigmore Street in London and his three sons joined him. They produced a large range of domestic ironware for houses and institutions, supplying the Australian colonial market and exhibiting in International exhibitions. Five successive generations of the family managed the company until taken over by Thorn EMI in 1965. Accessible through: website of the Historic Houses Trust <http://collection.hht.net.au/firsthht/digitalTrade>.

⁷¹ Boorman and Djabri, 2009, pp. 46-59.

Nuthurst and Horsham. The dispute with the Horsham Rural District Council regarding the public rights of access over Forest footpaths would have cost him dearly. It was in the Chancery Division of the High Courts of Justice with two Queen's Council and a Barrister at law prosecuting for Molyneux, however, in the end it was settled out of Court. Perhaps this soured the ownership of the estate for Molyneux, for he sold it, probably before 1913, to John Thoburn McGaw (1872-1952) known as Jack, the son of an Irish landowner and entrepreneur who had built up large wealth from sheep and minerals in Australia. The estate may have been empty for a time as the 1905 and 1911 *Kelly's Directory of Sussex* does not mention Molyneux as an owner but the Trustees of Robert B. Aldridge as lords of the manor and one of the principal landowners in Lower Beeding, but in 1911 with J.T. McGaw also noted as a principal landowner with H.E.Dennis as resident at St. Leonard's Park. Moreover, the 1911 census has no mention of Molyneux in the Forest at that time.⁷²

The 1910-15 Land Valuation Survey gives a clearer picture of land ownership and the value of the St. Leonard's Forest estate, and how it was broken up into smaller estates. On 1 September 1913 it was noted in the field books that Harold E. Dennis owned the mansion land and sporting rights of St. Leonards, freehold, which amounted to 122 acres. It was valued 'as found', the inspector noting that the house had been much improved since 1909 but a prior value could not be given, but this rather indicates that Dennis had bought around 1909. The gross value of the estate was estimated to be £17,883, and this was made up of £12,083 for the buildings, £500 for timber, and £250 for fruit trees and £1000 for other things growing on the land, which were not detailed. Additions were made of £300 for public rights of way, footpaths, and £83 for tithes. A sketch was made of the building with measurements and description of building material, mainly stone and tile, the condition was given as 'good' and a semi-circular rose garden drawn in the eastern corner of the front courtyard. There were five parts to the estate, and included in the valuation was a dairy, wash house and woodland, all without tenants, and then 53 acres of grassland rented out from

⁷² HM MS 2917.1-2, and *Kelly's Directory of Sussex* 1905 and 1911, accessed through: <http://www.historicaldirectories.org>. (hereafter *Kelly's Directory of Sussex* 1905 or 1911).

September 1908 for £40 a year and valued at £2514 over and above the mansion valuation.⁷³

The old St. Leonard's Forest mansion, New Park now known as St. Leonard's Park, had been bought freehold around 1908 or 1909 by Harold Egerton Dennis of the Dennis Bros Ltd motor car and bus pioneers of Guildford. However, *The London Gazette* of 1915 shows him in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve as a Lieutenant so presumably Dennis served in the Royal Navy in the First World War and did not return to the forest.⁷⁴ It certainly appears that McGaw owned the whole estate including St. Leonard's Park and the Grange around 1913, although as this is the date of the Land Valuation Survey it may well have been later, particularly if Dennis served in the First World War and did not return. Once McGaw had bought the estate he lived with his family in the rebuilt Grange, and confusingly, given the date, is noted in *Kelly's Directory of Sussex* 1911 as a principal landowner in Lower Beeding along with Saillard of Buchan Hill and Loder of Leonardslee. Jack McGaw continued to live at St. Leonard's Forest in some style, establishing a private cricket ground on the estate and developing a talent for watercolour painting, exhibiting at the Royal Academy and founding the Association of Sussex Artists. He died in 1952 and the estate was sold by his family.⁷⁵

c) Coolhurst

In 1830, Arthur Chichester sold the Coolhurst estate of about 55 acres to Mary Compton, the Dowager Marchioness of Northampton.⁷⁶ According to Horsfield, the marchioness spent a considerable amount of money improving the property, and he wrote that she had the main part of the house demolished and rebuilt by the architect P.F. Robinson of London, with the remaining offices improved and altered. It was rebuilt in the Elizabethan style, and Horsfield described how the south front, extending

⁷³ TNA, IR 124/9/116 and IR 58/94086.

⁷⁴ *The London Gazette* 8 June 1915 Issue 29186 p. 5513.

⁷⁵ Boorman and Djabri, 2009, pp. 46-59 and *Kelly's Directory of Sussex* 1911.

⁷⁶ Hudson T.P. (ed.) (1986) *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex*, Vol. VI Pt. 2., The Institute of Historical Research by Oxford University Press, p. 165 (hereafter VCH Vol. VI.2).

to 70 feet, opened onto a terrace protected by a gothic balustrade with steps in the front and at each end onto the lawn. The flower garden was at some distance from the house but 'enriched by magnificent timber trees and very fine rhododendrons' which, Horsfield wrote, added greatly to the beauty of the spot (see figure 5.13).⁷⁷

The marchioness died in 1843 and Coolhurst passed to her daughter, Frances Elizabeth, who married Charles Scrase-Dickins. Coolhurst has remained largely in the hands of this same family up to the present day, although the main house was sold in the 20th century. Hurst, writing in the 1880s noted that at that time the owner was Lady Frances Elizabeth's grandson, Charles Robert Scrase-Dickins (1857-1947) and the present owner's great uncle. His obituary in *The Times* noted that he died in his 90th year, had attended Eton and Oxford, and was President of the County Hospital in Brighton as well as serving on the Almoners' committee of Westminster Hospital, and as a local Magistrate. It was noted that he was naturally shy and retiring, 'intent on helping others and no more unselfish or kindly man existed'. However, it was suggested that he would be remembered 'as the creator of what is probably the most perfect, as it is certainly is the most natural, of wood gardens in a county where such places abound'.⁷⁸ This is interesting as the garden today is largely forgotten and yet less than a century ago it was a classic woodland garden of the time.

Hurst continued with her piece on Coolhurst, noting that the house was a fine specimen of the Tudor style of architecture, and that unusually around the top of the house was a carved Latin frieze of the first verse of the 127th psalm, which translates to 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it' (see figure 5.14). Hurst also noted that in the grounds azaleas, rhododendrons and other shrubs 'flourish in great beauty' and that a fine sheet of water was formed from the river Arun.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Horsfield, 1835, p. 265.

⁷⁸ *The Times*, Sept 06 1947 p. 7, issue 50859.

⁷⁹ Hurst, 1889, pp. 145-6.



Figure 5.13: Engraving of Coolhurst before alterations, reproduced from Horsfield, (1835) *The History, Antiquities and Topography of the County of Sussex*, opposite p. 264.



Figure 5.14: Engraving of Coolhurst taken from *The Garden*, Vol. 31, 1887, showing the larger house and more mature garden.

Ten years later, Goodliffe in his walks through this part of the Forest wrote that he passed Hammer and Hawkins pond, The Goldings and then he reached the head of Coolhurst pond with St. Leonard's Lodge, a quarry and then the Sun Oak which he describes as 'one of the grandest specimens in the forest' (see figure 4.12 and frontispiece). He commented on the fine woods of Coolhurst and their abundant treasures of specimen larch, pine, beech and oak. Near the Forest church of St. John, built in 1835, he saw a magnificent Californian redwood, *Sequoia sempervirens*, which he estimated to be 70 to 80 feet high. He then described how he passed, what he surmised from its attractive garden, was the gardeners cottage in whose care, he wrote, was a beautiful collection of bulbs and herbaceous plants, as well as in the private grounds huge azaleas and rhododendrons and the 'graceful foliage of a well grown *Fagus asplenifolia*, or fern-leaved beech'.⁸⁰

The Ordnance Survey map 1st Revision of 1897 (see figure 5.15) clearly shows the small Coolhurst estate south of Hammerpond Road with the entrance to the Aldridge estate to the north east, St John's Church in Coolhurst wood and the mansion of Coolhurst itself with orchard and large kitchen garden. The large area marked as Coolhurst woods between Hammerpond Road and Mill Pond show paths through planted woodland and a series of small ponds on the eastern side linking with the Mill Pond. These were used to great effect to grow water lilies by Charles Scrase-Dickins according to his great nephew. Immediately south and west of the house is the parkland, giving good views to the water over a haha and with Coolhurst Farm to the west.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Goodliffe, 1905, p. 48.

⁸¹ Personal discussion with Major Mark Scarse-Dickins, great nephew of Charles Robert Scrase-Dickins, at Coolhurst, on 6.3.2012 (hereafter Pers. Comm. 6.3.12).

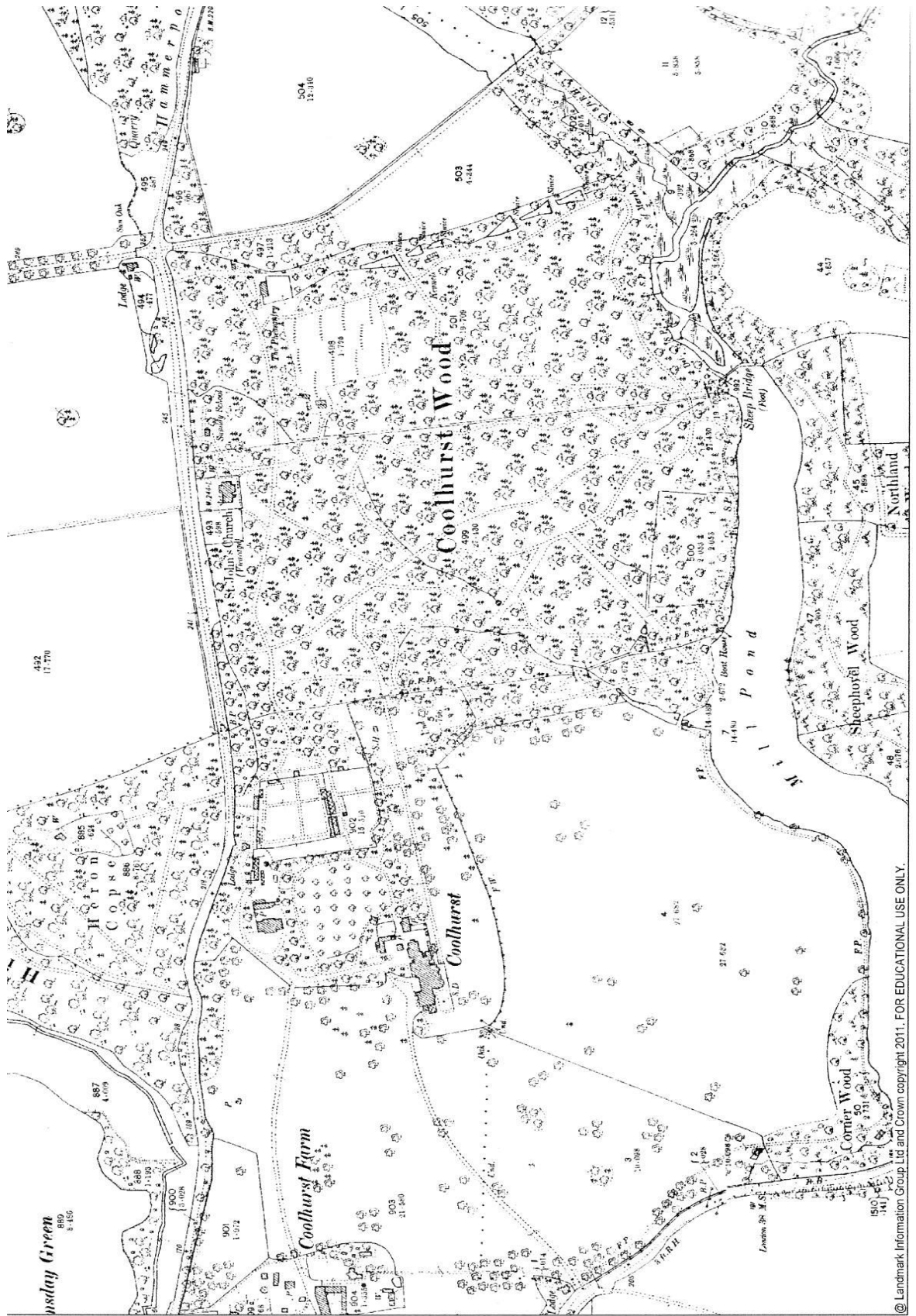


Figure 5.15: Coolhurst estate and wood, OS County Series 1:2500, 1st Revision, 1897, reproduced with permission of Edina Historic Digimap.

Pike's Blue Book of 1899-1900 recorded that the gardener on the Coolhurst estate at that time was Andrew Kemp. In addition there was William Weller in Coolhurst Lodge, Charles Reynolds was the bailiff and Henry Peacock the coachman. The 1901 census provides a bit more detail in that it shows Charles Reynolds, aged 61, living at Coolhurst Farm, with his wife, Elizabeth, 59, working in the dairy with her single 36 year old daughter and 80 year old mother. In West Lodge was Anne Peacock, 64, and her husband, Henry, 60 is shown in the main house where he was working as coachman. They had four adult sons and daughters living with them, all single. The eldest daughter, 39, was not noted as having any occupation, but the eldest son was a carrier, the youngest daughter, 32 a court dressmaker, the youngest son was an engine cleaner, and lodging with the family was a 25 year old border who was a baby linen maker. By this time it appeared that William Waller had died, and his widow, Susan, 77 was the lodge keeper in her own right, with her single daughter, Helen, 40.

In another lodge was William Pronger, 38, gardener, with his older wife, Eliza, 48. There were two young men, John Edwards, 25 and Charles Wells, 19, both gardeners, and as their address was Coolhurst Gardens, they were perhaps lodged in a bothy. Andrew Kemp, 60, was in Coolhurst Cottage, not noted as a gardener but rather lodge keeper with his wife, 67 and two single daughters, Jessie aged 24 and Jeannie, 20. Jessie was a teacher and Jeannie a maker of some description, possibly dressmaker but difficult to decipher. The Kemp family were all born in Scotland, and Andrew Kemp was noted in *The Garden* journal of 1887 as previously the gardener for 'Mr Cunningham, of Orchid renown in Scotland and well known to be one of the best Orchid growers in the country'. Kemp was clearly a respected and skilled gardener, one of a growing profession who would be valued by the estate owner and enthusiast. Finally, there was another cottage with a widower, James Cook, 61, a gamekeeper, and his 25 year old son who was a house painter. In the main house itself the Scrase-Dickins family were not resident on census day, and could perhaps have been staying on their Irish estate, but there were two young laundry maids in residence, Emily Jones, 28 and Lizzie

Turner, 21, along with Henry Peacock the coachman. Thus it can be seen that a total of 24 people lived on the estate, half of them employed by Coolhurst, which are seven men and five women.⁸²

The 1901 census shows that Coolhurst is a much smaller estate than St. Leonard's Forest, with an emphasis on gardeners at the beginning of the 20th century. It is an older community of workers, with single adult children living with their parents but working outside the estate, and with no younger children. Although only a snapshot in time it is not quite what one would expect. The number of older single women may have been a function of the absence of men in the wars of the late 19th century. The Valuation Survey of 1910-1915 shows the Coolhurst estate with house, garden, stabling, park, dairy farm with 17 cows, garden cottage and the three lodges, south, north and west, to have a gross value of £17,768 and to total 87 acres. This is an increase in acreage from the original 55 acres when the Scrase-Dickins family inherited the property in the mid-19th century.

The personal recollections of Major Mark Scrase-Dickins suggested that the Coolhurst estate was in fact much larger than just the house, garden, park and farm. Additions had been made by the inheritance of land from the Aldridges through Charles Robert Scrase-Dickins' mother, Anna Maria Aldridge, daughter of Robert Aldridge, and also through acquisition which extended as far as the village of Mannings Heath.⁸³ The Valuation Survey Field Books confirm this further extent of the family's holdings at the beginning of the 20th century. When the details were recorded in 1913, Charles Robert Scrase-Dickins is noted as the freeholder not only of the Coolhurst estate but Coolhurst Mill Farm and Whitebridge, three Coolhurst cottages at Buchanbridge Hill, three cottages on Doomsday Green, Rickfield Farm, Lower Goldings Farm, Birchenbridge House and mill machinery, Mill Farm, cottage Northlands woods and orchards, land and cottages at Mannings Heath, Holm Farm, Woolmers Farm, Newells Farm, Newells

⁸² *Pike's Blue Book 1899-1900*, Horsham, Crawley and District, and Goldring, W. (1887) Coolhurst, Sussex. *The Garden*, Vol. **31**, p. 25, and Census of England and Wales, 1901, Sussex, Reg. Dis. 13.

⁸³ Pers. Comm. 6.3.12.

mansion and park, Seamans Farm, and Forest House. The vagaries of the field books allow for some duplication and omissions, but given this the freeholds amount to a further 585 acres at a further gross valuation of £51,592, which is a good accumulation of property over half a century.

Through examination of the details of the value one can see how it could be made up, and apart from buildings, the category for timber and fruit is useful. Arable is not mentioned apart from 'other things growing' and the crop is not specified, although one comment for Coolhurst Mill Farm is 'arable rather foul' although the grassland is in fair condition, grassland being sometimes mentioned in the comments. One can only assume that arable did not feature much in this estate although fruit production, mainly apples, was of some importance. From the total value of the whole estate of £69,360 the timber value was £1923, fruit £953 and grassland £256. It appears that ownership of the estate and rents were of more importance than farm production, however, what is missing from this is the production of dairy cattle, the grassland was good grazing and Major Mark Scrase-Dickins recollected that the estate was an early breeder of Jersey cows. An interesting feature that does reoccur on these properties is that the state is mainly poor, particularly in the cottages, such as the Doomsday Green cottages, one of which, rented by a Frank Tanner is 'partially falling down' the other two are noted as in 'poor condition'. It is perhaps an indication of the interest shown in the estate as a whole that a comment made by the valuation inspector of six acres of land and buildings at the Goldings is that 'owner is not certain where this is so has not given any other particulars'. It appears that the owner's interests lay in plant breeding and growing rather than estate management.⁸⁴

In 1934 Charles Robert Scrase-Dickins was awarded the RHS Victoria Medal for Horticulture as an amateur gardener and successful grower of difficult plants. It appears from journal articles thirty or so years earlier that he was indeed expert in the

⁸⁴ Pers. Comm. 6.3.12, and TNA IR 124/9/120, IR 124/9/124, IR 58/94028, 94036, 94040, 94041, 94045, 94047, 94086, 94987.

growing of camellias, lilies, orchids and early bulbs, using his house at Coolhurst and the gardens there to showcase his achievements. An entry in the 1885 edition of *The Garden*, an illustrated weekly journal of horticulture founded by William Robinson of Gravetye, Sussex, and author of well-known and innovative garden books such as *The Wild Garden* and *The English Flower Garden*, first shows an entry by Scrase-Dickins about the cultivation of camellias. He wrote an article about the cultivation and habits of the single camellia, a rare plant at that time, and replied to readers' questions. He noted that his own single camellias were too precious to test their hardiness, but saw no reason why, like the doubles, they should not thrive out of doors, and in this he was proved correct. He had three distinct varieties of single camellia, a single white, a large rose colour and a red. These were drawn and painted at Scrase-Dickins' garden on 6 March 1885 and served as an illustration in *The Garden* (see figure 5.16). He wrote that a curious little form of the common single red grew at Coolhurst against an east wall, over 15 feet high and quite old. He thought it 'a jolly little thing, quaint and pretty for cutting'. A later article by W.G. Goldring suggested that Scrase-Dickins had 'undoubtedly the finest collection of seedlings in Europe'.⁸⁵

William Goldring (1854-1919), journalist and landscape gardener, visited Coolhurst in June 1886 and his description and impressions were published in the January issue of *The Garden* the following year. Initially, Goldring was struck by the colour, scents, and sounds of birds and insects which assailed his senses and which he thought was totally in harmony with the quiet country home that was Coolhurst.

⁸⁵ Desmond, R. (1994) *Dictionary of British and Irish Botanists and Horticulturists*. London: Taylor and Francis and C.R. Scrase-Dickins (1885) Garden Flora, Plate 506, Single Camellias, *The Garden* Vol. **28**, pp. 202-3.



Figure 5.16: Group of single camellias drawn at Coolhurst, 6 March 1885, artist unknown, and illustrated in *The Garden*, **28**, page 202.

He speculated that the garden remained much as it had a hundred years ago, avoiding the 'modern caprices' of fashion, and was satisfied that the only bedding out was in a tasteful stone edged parterre. He described how welsh poppies, yellow fumitories and wall ferns grew from crevices in the house walls and terraces, a very natural planting

with a sense of the wild that would have pleased Ruskin. The lawn sloped towards the park and lake, separated by the ha-ha, and beyond a dense wood. The lake was full of water lilies, and the park had many fine hawthorns including one of a pendulous habit. Goldring was impressed by the arboretum, and suggested that perhaps Bishop Henry Compton (1632-1713) of Fulham Palace, an ancestor of the Marchioness of Northampton, and an inveterate collector of exotic and unusual trees and shrubs, had helped to enrich the arboretum. Given the dates this is unlikely, although the Marchioness may have had access to some unusual specimens through this family link.

Goldring's very thorough article named the varieties of tree and shrubs that he saw at Coolhurst. Of the non-native trees he wrote that they were mostly from North America, such as the false acacia, black walnut, hickories, magnolias, snowdrop trees and amelanchias. He noted the presence of some European trees such as evergreen oaks, silver leaved lime, wingnut and pear. The conifers also appeared to be mainly North American with the Canadian hemlock fir, Californian Cypress and Californian redwood, although Japanese red cedar grew well. Native beeches were the prevailing trees on the lawns, but there were also oaks and sycamores of remarkable size, wild service trees, mountain ash and yews, fine groups of scotch fir and old birches by the lake. The glory, according to Goldring, was the arboretum which in June of 1886 when he visited was 'aglow with fiery tints of azaleas and the air filled with their spicy fragrance'. He was impressed with the size quality and colour of the azaleas and thought the rhododendrons as remarkable, but not so elegant or picturesque as the azaleas.⁸⁶

William Robinson in his *English Flower Garden* quotes Scrase-Dickins who recommended growing the white Indian azalea, which flowers early and grows well outside if sheltered and left to grow naturally. An illustration is given showing *Azalea indica* in full bloom in a wood at Coolhurst, Sussex. There was clearly some uncertainty at this time as to whether camellias and azaleas were hardy enough to be grown

⁸⁶ Goldring, W. (1887) Coolhurst, Sussex. *The Garden*, Vol. **31**, pp. 21-2, 25.

outside, and Scrase-Dickins was at the forefront of trying a variety of specimens in his woodland garden. Goldring noted that vases of *Azalea indica* were in the hall and dining room of Coolhurst when he visited, along with a 'grand specimen' of the orchid *Cattleya lobata* with three spikes of flower.⁸⁷

A later journal article in *Country Life* in 1936, which focussed on the growing of lilies in garden and woodland, demonstrated what an expert Scrase-Dickins must have been in developing and growing a variety of lilies. In fact he was invited to be one of the first amateur growers to join the RHS Lily Committee when it was set up in 1931. The article mentioned a very desirable white martagon lily growing in open woodland at Coolhurst, and a hybrid of the orange lily, *Lilium croceum* named Coolhurst Hybrid, which was found and developed at Coolhurst. Five of the six photographs in the article show different varieties of lily growing in the Coolhurst woodland garden (see figure 5.17).⁸⁸



Figure 5.17: Photograph reproduced from the article Lilies for Garden and Woodland, *Country Life*, 1936, page 508.

⁸⁷ Robinson, W. (1883, 1903) 8th Edition, *The English Flower Garden and Home Grounds*, London: John Murray, pp. 121-2.

⁸⁸ Taylor, G.C. (1936) Lilies for Garden and Woodland, *Country Life*, 14 Nov 1936, pp. 507-9.

d) Leonardslee

As noted in Chapter 4.2c, approximately 1000 acres of the southern part of the St. Leonard's estate was sold by John Aldridge in 1803 to Charles George Beauclerk who built a house on the land called St. Leonard's Lodge, and set out an ornamental garden and kitchen, or walled, garden. Charles George Beauclerk (1774-1845) was the only son of Topham Beauclerk (1739-80) and Lady Diana Spencer (1735-1808). With these eminent, scandalous and profligate forbears it is perhaps unsurprising that the quiet and retiring Charles Beauclerk should look to the secluded St. Leonard's Forest to make his home.⁸⁹

Charles was educated at Eton and Oxford and was sent to Italy after graduating due to his poor health. He recovered well and married Emily (Mimi) Ogilvie (1778-1832) the first cousin of his close friend, the Third Lord Holland. She was the daughter of the Dowager Duchess of Leinster and her second husband, William Ogilvie, former tutor to the Duchess' 22 children. Lady Holland described Charles Beauclerk as intelligent but silent, suggesting that he was lost in shyness. Lady Holland also reported that he was spending beyond his means and thought he was half-ruined by the purchase of the southern portion of St. Leonard's estate for which he had sold up his investments and the crumbling ancestral home of Speke Hall in Liverpool. Initially, due to the costs of farming the new land he could not afford to build a house but Lady Holland reported later that in about 1808 he had completed the house and had acquired eight children in as many years, but she feared for Mimi's isolation in St. Leonard's Forest.

Hicks noted in the epilogue to her biography of his mother that Charles and Mimi went to live in Italy where Mimi became a noted hostess, friendly with Shelley, Byron and Trelawney. Djabri suggests that in fact it was only Mimi that went to Italy taking her daughters with her and introducing them into society there. Indeed, one of her seven surviving daughters, Caroline Anne Beauclerk who married Robert Aldridge, heir of the

⁸⁹ Hicks, C. (2001) *Improper Pursuit, The Scandalous Life of Lady Di Beauclerk*, London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., p. x Diana's family tree (hereafter Hicks, 2001).

St. Leonard's estate, became a close friend of Mary Shelley and had been much admired by Edward Trelawney (1792-1881) the adventurer and biographer.⁹⁰

The Beauclerk family were supportive of Mary Shelley, author of 'Frankenstein', daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and second wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley, when she returned to England after Shelley's death with their small son. Caroline's sister, Georgina became her best friend and tried to intercede on her behalf with Sir Timothy Shelley, her father-in-law who lived at Field Place, Horsham, and who had not forgiven her for eloping with his son and thereby abandoning the first wife and family. It seems Mary Shelley was fond of the eldest Beauclerk brother, Major Aubrey William Beauclerk, and had hopes of marriage to him, but he was five years her junior with two illegitimate children and he chose to marry the 19 year old third daughter of a Baronet, Ida Goring. Ida later drowned in one of the ponds on the Leonardslee estate on 23 April 1839, when she was 24 years old. The inquest found she had probably been 'seized with giddiness' and accidentally fallen in.⁹¹ Mary Shelley offered comfort and sympathy to the widower Aubrey Beauclerk but marriage did not come her way and instead he turned to her young friend, Rosa Robinson.⁹²

When first at St. Leonard's Lodge, Charles Beauclerk had been enlisted as Captain and then promoted to Major in the Sussex Volunteers, commanding three companies in the Northern Division. This force had been set up to defend the homeland from Napoleon Bonaparte and was disbanded when peace came. It seems likely that after this Mimi went abroad and perhaps Charles joined her for some of the time. There is evidence in *The Morning Post* of 1826 and 1827 that the Duke of Rutland was residing at 'the seat of Mr and Mrs Beauclerk in St. Leonard's Forest', although in 1827 the Duke was due to dine with Mr Beauclerk at his seat there.⁹³ It must have been around

⁹⁰ Hicks, 2001, pp. 254, 357 and Djabri, S.C. (2005) Charles Beauclerk of St. Leonard's Lodge, *Horsham Heritage*, 12 Spring, pp. 31-45 (hereafter Djabri, 2005).

⁹¹ *The Morning Post*, London, England, Monday, April 29, 1839, Issue 21316.

⁹² Seymour, M. (2000) *Mary Shelley*. London: John Murray (publishers) Ltd., pp. 414-426.

⁹³ *The Morning Post*, London, England, Monday April 10, 1826 Issue 17256 and Saturday May 19, 1827 Issue 17606.

this time that Charles put his energies into developing the basics of a great garden at St. Leonard's Lodge. Later, after Mimi's death in 1832 he moved to South Lodge, the 1841 Census records him living there by himself with two male servants and two female servants. This was the property of Henry Boldero (1788-1859) the member of a military family who had shooting rights over the St. Leonard's Lodge estate let by the Beauclerk's on an annual basis. This move had allowed his eldest son, Aubrey William Beauclerk, to live at St. Leonard's Lodge with his first wife and then after she drowned, his second wife, Rosa, where the 1841 census records them with five young children and seven servants.

There is a hint of how productive the estate was in a comment made in *The Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* of 1833 which discussed the poor harvest of that year and compared the previous year's production when the estate of Mr Beauclerk of St. Leonard's Forest produced 6000 bushels of apples compared to the current several hundred.⁹⁴ Further evidence of this comes after Charles Beauclerk's death in 1845 from the detailed sales particulars of 1852 when the estate was sold by his eldest son, Aubrey. The sale was presumably in an effort to honour the codicils of his will, given that there was an order from the High Court of Chancery to sell following a court hearing of *Perry and Another versus Beauclerk and Others*.⁹⁵ The 1852 sales particulars state that for sale were 1919 acres of productive arable meadow and woodlands with some thriving plantations including 96 acres of valuable orchard in a high state of cultivation. The annual income value given for this estate was £1638 13s 9d with an extra £27 7s 0d for ground rent on long leases of 999 years. Another attraction emphasised in the sale particulars was the accessibility of the estate, about 37 miles from the metropolis. It was noted that the estate was only four miles from a railway station at Horsham, and five miles from a station at Haywards Heath, allowing easy access to London, and demonstrating the suitability of the estate for the new London wealth and their need to escape from the city.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, Portsmouth, Monday July 8, 1833, Issue number 1761.

⁹⁵ *The Standard*, London, England, Saturday May 15, 1852, Issue number 8663.

⁹⁶ East Sussex Record Office, SAY 2831.

As can be seen from the plan of the estate attached to the sales particulars (see figure 5.18), the estate was split into four lots, to be sold separately or together. Lot one consisted of St. Leonard's Lodge, the mansion house, park, meadow, pasture, woodland and plantations, sundry cottages and houses and an estate on the northern edge of 48 acres known as Stonewick. The whole of lot one amounted to 955 acres and brought in an annual income of £803 in rentals. The mansion house in stone and slate with eight bedrooms was described as suitable for a family of distinction and 'delightfully situated on table land reigning over well timbered park and beautifully undulated domain, lake, valley, picturesque and extensive views of Weald of Sussex with the renowned south down hills in the distance'.

Descriptions of the pleasure grounds near to the house show how much Beauclerk must have been the initiating force for the laying out of the garden. The gardens are described in the sales particulars as being very ornamental, interspersed with walks beneath luxuriant growing Beech and other timber and comprise the American Garden containing magnolias, rhododendrons, azaleas and other flowering shrubs in great luxuriance, of great height, growth and beauty. This would indicate a reasonably mature garden already set out with exotics. The American Garden is identified on the map to the north of the mansion house amid a maze of paths (see figure 5.18). Hurst recorded that the American Garden was planted by Beauclerk and was one of the oldest in the country, 'having magnolias of different kinds, rhododendrons and similar shrubs of great height and size.' The Wellingtonias, *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, which are still standing today, were planted at this time having been introduced to the UK in about 1853.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Hurst, 1889, p. 167.

Figure 5.18: Plan of the St. Leonard's Lodge (Leonardslee) estate attached to the sales particulars of 1852, ESRO SAY 2831.

The kitchen garden was situated a short distance from the house to the east, part walled and extending to just over one acre, clothed with fruit trees both bushes and standards, and including peach. Beyond the kitchen garden was the park of 32 acres, described as beautifully timbered, undulating woods and thriving plantations, with a winding and extensive lake timbered to the waters' edge. There were the usual buildings of a thriving estate, the coach house, stabling, cow sheds, wood house, coal house, piggery, fattening sheds, barns, bark shed, carpenters workshop, cider house, and ice house. In addition were a number of cottages which included much of the village of Lower Beeding on the north east side of the estate, the estate beyond this still being owned by Robert Aldridge.⁹⁸

The 1852 sales particulars show that the central part of the estate of 955 acres, identified as Lot One, in the parish of Lower Beeding, was mostly garden, parkland and woodland with some arable fields growing wheat, oats, rye, barley and turnips. Around the edges of the estate was Lot Two to the south, Park Farm with 612 acres, Lot Three to the north east, Chase Farm with 184 acres, and Lot Four to the north west, Eastlands with 166 acres. Of note are the orchards of Park Farm which were 86 acres of mainly apples, with a cider and apple house amongst the barns. Chase Farm and Eastlands also had orchards of about 10 acres between them. At Chase Farm value would have been added by the addition of a smart five-bedroomed residence with gardens and pleasure ground, with a tenant, and Eastlands had been improved with a range of new farm buildings for cattle and fattening.⁹⁹

The estate was bought in its entirety by a wealthy merchant who traded with Russia, William Egerton Hubbard (1812-1883), and who was the younger brother of John Gellibrand Hubbard, first Baron Addington. It appears that Hubbard not only bought the whole estate but added 57 acres to it over the next two decades. The Parliamentary Returns of 1875 record a list of landowners in Sussex holding over 1000

⁹⁸ East Sussex Record Office, SAY 2831.

⁹⁹ East Sussex Record Office, SAY 2831. The discrepancy of 2 acres between the total acreage of 1919 for sale and the individual lots of 1917 is made up by the rods and poles not noted.

acres, and W. E. Hubbard is listed as having 1976 acres, producing a gross annual rental of £2188 21s 0d per annum.¹⁰⁰ Before purchasing Leonardslee he had been living and working in St. Petersburg with his family and had returned to settle in England in 1843. The family consisted of his wife, Louisa Ellen Baldock, four sons and three daughters. The eldest of the children, Louisa Maria Hubbard (1836-1906), was born in St. Petersburg and educated at home in Leonardslee. She grew up to be a great advocate of women's education and employment and was influential in increasing work opportunities for women, initially through the Anglican Deaconess movement. She wrote and published pioneering works and was central in bringing about changes for the position of women in Victorian Britain through founding a teacher training facility in Chichester, and what later became known as the Royal College of Midwives.¹⁰¹

When Hubbard bought the estate his initial concern was with the house, St. Leonard's Lodge, which although in a good position was in need of attention. Hurst wrote that the view from the house and grounds of Leonardslee were almost unrivalled in varied richness and beauty.¹⁰² Thus the original house was demolished and a new Italianate mansion built of sandstone was erected on the site in 1855 to the design of T. L. Donaldson and renamed Leonardslee. It does not appear that Hubbard added much to the garden that Charles Beauclerk founded, although clearly the gardens and grounds were being managed well by the gardeners. Short *et al* note that a good variety of cooking apple, named 'Dr. Hogg' in honour of the Victorian pomologist of that name, was developed from a seedling of the variety 'Calville Blanc' by the head gardener of Leonardslee, Mr S. Ford, and it gained an RHS First Class Certificate in 1878.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Ellis, W.S. (1925) *The Parks and Forests of Sussex, Ancient and Modern*. Lewes: H. Wolff, p. 249.

¹⁰¹ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entry for Louisa Maria Hubbard, accessible through: www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk and Wojtczak, H. (2008) *Notable Sussex Women*. Hastings: The Hastings Press, p. 66.

¹⁰² Hurst, 1889, p. 167.

¹⁰³ Short, B. with May, P., Vines, G., Bur, A-M., (2012) *Apples & Orchards in Sussex*, Lewes: Action in rural Sussex & Brighton Permaculture Trust, pp. 28, 36.

In 1876 Hubbard's youngest daughter, Marion, married into a local family, the Loders of High Beeches near Handcross, five miles from Leonardslee. Sir Robert Loder, Bt., bought High Beeches in 1847. His father had also been trading in St. Petersburg it is likely the families knew each other from this connection. Sir Robert was a keen gardener, exhibiting at horticultural shows including the Crystal Palace, and this interest was shared by several of his seven sons. The eldest brother, Edmund Loder (1849-1920), inherited the Baronetcy in 1888 and acquired Leonardslee the following year from his in-laws, the Hubbards, Marion's father having died five years previously.¹⁰⁴ One of the younger brothers, the fifth son, Gerald, began to create the gardens at Wakehurst in 1903, which are now part of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. Wilfred, the second son, inherited High Beeches but it was his son, Giles, who was the enthusiastic gardener and continued the work of his grandfather from 1906.

On coming to Leonardslee Sir Edmund Loder brought with him gardening experience from his previous garden at Floore in Northamptonshire where he lived with his family for 12 years. Here he had grown narcissus, cacti and tree ferns and had also built a rock garden. Sir Alfred E. Pease quotes in his memoir from Sir Edmund Loder's own notes which, as a meticulous naturalist and horticulturist, assisted him in the acclimatisation of exotic plants. He regularly noted rainfall, degrees of frost, minimum and maximum temperatures and described the situation of Leonardslee as 270 feet above sea-level, 9 miles from the northern slopes of the South Downs and 13 miles in a direct line to the sea near Shoreham.¹⁰⁵

Sir Edward Loder was not a public man, his serving on the local Magistrates bench was his only public duty. His friend and neighbour, John G. Millais (1865-1931), the fourth son of Sir John Everett Millais, painter and founder with Holman Hunt of the Pre-

¹⁰⁴ Thacker, C. (1994) *The Genius of Gardening, The History of Gardens in Britain and Ireland*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, p. 262, (hereafter Thacker, 1994) and Loder, R., undated, *Leonardslee, lakes and gardens*. Guidebook published by Leonardslee, pp. 4-5 (hereafter Guidebook Leonardslee).

¹⁰⁵ Pease, A.E. (1923) *Edmund Loder, Naturalist, Horticulturist, Traveller and Sportsman, A Memoir*. London: John Murray, p. 65-6, (hereafter Pease, 1923).

Raphaelite Brotherhood, and an expert on rhododendron himself, wrote that Sir Edmund Loder began collecting rhododendrons and azaleas, and then became more interested in the hybridisation having been introduced to Harry Mangles who first hybridized them at Valewood House on the Surrey-Sussex border and was known as the 'high priest of the rhododendron cult'. Sir Edmund increased his knowledge of the subject by reading, corresponding with nurserymen and botanic gardens, and by visiting other enthusiasts such as J.C. Williams at Caerhays in Cornwall. After years of development he produced his most successful hybridisations which were the *Rhododendron loderi* group. Millais contributed to Sir Alfred Pease's memoir suggesting that the *Rhododendron loderi* was 'without doubt the finest hybrid rhododendron ever raised and one that as a hardy shrub is never likely to be surpassed.' Of the many varieties produced and named by Sir Edmund, Millais wrote that the variety most admired was 'King George' (see figure 5.19). He further noted that he grew the loderi group in his garden at Compton's Brow, Horsham and its high quality stood out from the others.¹⁰⁶

Sir Edmund Loder continued to plant in the American garden, or the Dell, and to increase the planting on the slopes and walks of the valley paying attention to colours and grouping so that the woodland effect would be retained. By the turn of the century Leonardslee was being acknowledged as a superb garden. The head gardener, W.A. Cook, was publishing small pieces of horticultural interest in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* regarding plants and trees growing at Leonardslee. For example, in March 1907 he contributed the fact that there was a fine large 93 foot *Liriodendron tulipifera*, or tulip tree, growing at Leonardslee, and in the same month reported on the size and care of a magnificent Camellia near the house that had produced between 5000 and 6000 double pink flowers the previous year. The following month, in April 1907, he

¹⁰⁶ Pease, 1923, pp. 68, 303-6, and Brandon, 2010, p. 141.

described 18 different species of *Magnolia* growing well at Leonardslee with recommendations for care and maintenance.¹⁰⁷



Figure 5.19: *Rhododendron loderi* 'King George', one of the best known Loderi hybrids, developed in 1901, strong growing and richly scented. Illustration from Hilliers Gardener's Guide, page 516.¹⁰⁸

In October 1906, a lengthy article in *Gardeners' Chronicle* had extolled the excellence of the planting and the variety of plant species at Leonardslee, following a visit by the journal's writers, unidentified, to the gardens in June of that year. Their attention was first caught by the Palm Walk, winding away from the mansion on the west side and containing over 400 palms interspersed with bamboo and flowering shrubs such as camellia, deutzia and *Choisya ternata* and of course rhododendrons which featured throughout the garden. They commented how this planting gave the garden an 'unusually exotic appearance' given that the palms were large and could be seen from

¹⁰⁷ Cook, W.A. (1907) *Liriodendron Tulipifera*, and A Large Camellia Tree out of doors. *Gardeners' Chronicle*, March 30 1907, pp. 208-9, and Magnolias at Leonardslee, *Gardeners' Chronicle*, April 6 1907, p. 223.

¹⁰⁸ Kelly, J. (ed.) (1995) *The Hillier Gardener's Guide to Trees and Shrubs*. Newton Abbot: David and Charles, p. 516.

every viewpoint. However, they judged that the alpine garden and the shrubberies were the 'paramount features' of the garden. They noted the rock garden to the north-west behind the mansion. This was created in 1900 by James Pulham and Son from two types of their own artificial creation of rock called Pulhamite, and planted with azaleas and numerous varieties of alpines of varying habit such as the saxifrages. Walking from the rock garden to the American garden or Dell as it later became known, they observed that there were fewer trees than formerly, and that the undergrowth consisted of choice rhododendrons and other flowering shrubs. A supplementary illustration of the American garden in the May 1907 issue, the photograph taken in January, showed the hardy palms amongst leafless deciduous trees and the comment was that the palms and bamboos were a foil to the colourful rhododendrons and roses of June and July (see figure 5.20).

After noting the collections of bamboos and heathers they commented that the kitchen garden had a warm south wall planted with a large selection of less hardy flowering plants for their protection. The vegetable garden was described as being a full five acres; the production looked promising, and included 500 apple and pear trees encompassing 120 different varieties. Indoor plants were also cultivated in the greenhouses and included chrysanthemums and over 2000 carnations in 100 different varieties as well as soft indoor fruit. The end of the article emphasises that the success of this private garden reflected credit on its gardener, W.H. Cook, who clearly was very skilled and an asset to Sir Edmund Loder. However, Sir Edmund Loder was the driving force behind the development of Leonardslee, and as *The Gardeners' Chronicle* noted he 'possesses zeal for everything concerned with its betterment'.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Anon., (1906) Leonardslee, *The Gardener's Chronicle*, October 13 1906, pp. 253-4 and continued October 20 1906, pp. 272-3. (hereafter *The Gardeners Chronicle*, 1906).



Figure 5.20: Illustration from *The Gardener's Chronicle*, May 11 1907 of the American Garden at Leonardslee. Supplementary, no page number.

Sir Edmund Loder was well known in zoological circles as an enthusiastic naturalist and kept a variety of live animals in the gardens, and a collection of dead ones in the museum at Leonardslee. Goodliffe writing before 1905 noted that near the house to the west the turf was divided into paddocks in which grazed deer, antelopes, gazelles, ibex, springboks, mountain sheep, prairie dogs, wallabies and kangaroos, while on the other side of the valley amongst bracken and pine trees were fallow deer and Australian bush turkeys. In the ponds, beavers and beaver rats were kept. The more recent guide book notes that historically Sir Edmund Loder kept antelopes, axis deer, beavers, bush turkeys and barasingha (also known as swamp deer from parts of India and Nepal, and prized for their antlers), capybara and cavies, kangaroos and kookaburras, moufflon, prairie dogs, wallabies and mountain goats.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Goodliffe, 1905, p. 65 and Guidebook Leonardslee, p. 5.

The Land Valuation Survey of 1910-15 indicated that at this point in time the four original lots of the estate bought by Hubbard were still intact. Although W.E. Hubbard had died in 1883, his family still remained in the area for a short while. Goodliffe notes that W. Egerton Hubbard, presumably junior, was in residence at Selehurst and Miss Hubbard at Beedinglee. Both properties were owned by Loder when Goodliffe was writing. It is probable that the Miss Hubbard was Louisa. Pratt wrote that she stayed on the family estate until 1883 when after her father's death her brother built her a new home in Leonardslee. However, the 1911 census, as well as the Valuation Survey field books, no longer indicated any Hubbards on the estate in the first decade of the 20th century. The field books show Selehurst owned by Loder but leased to Basil Lang and Beedinglee also owned by Loder and occupied by a Mrs Rutherford.

The Land Valuation Survey confirmed that the value of the whole estate was quite considerable. Many of the cottages and small businesses in Lower Beeding and Crabtree were part of it, the farms such as Eastlands and Park Farm, and large houses such as Selehurst and Beedinglee. However, by far the most valuable property was Leonardslee itself, the mansion and gardens valued at £38,050 and noted in the comments as 'all garden pleasure grounds' (see figure 5.21). The value of the timber was given as £1602 and fruit £300 but under 'other' was value noted as £5000, presumably giving this value to the garden.

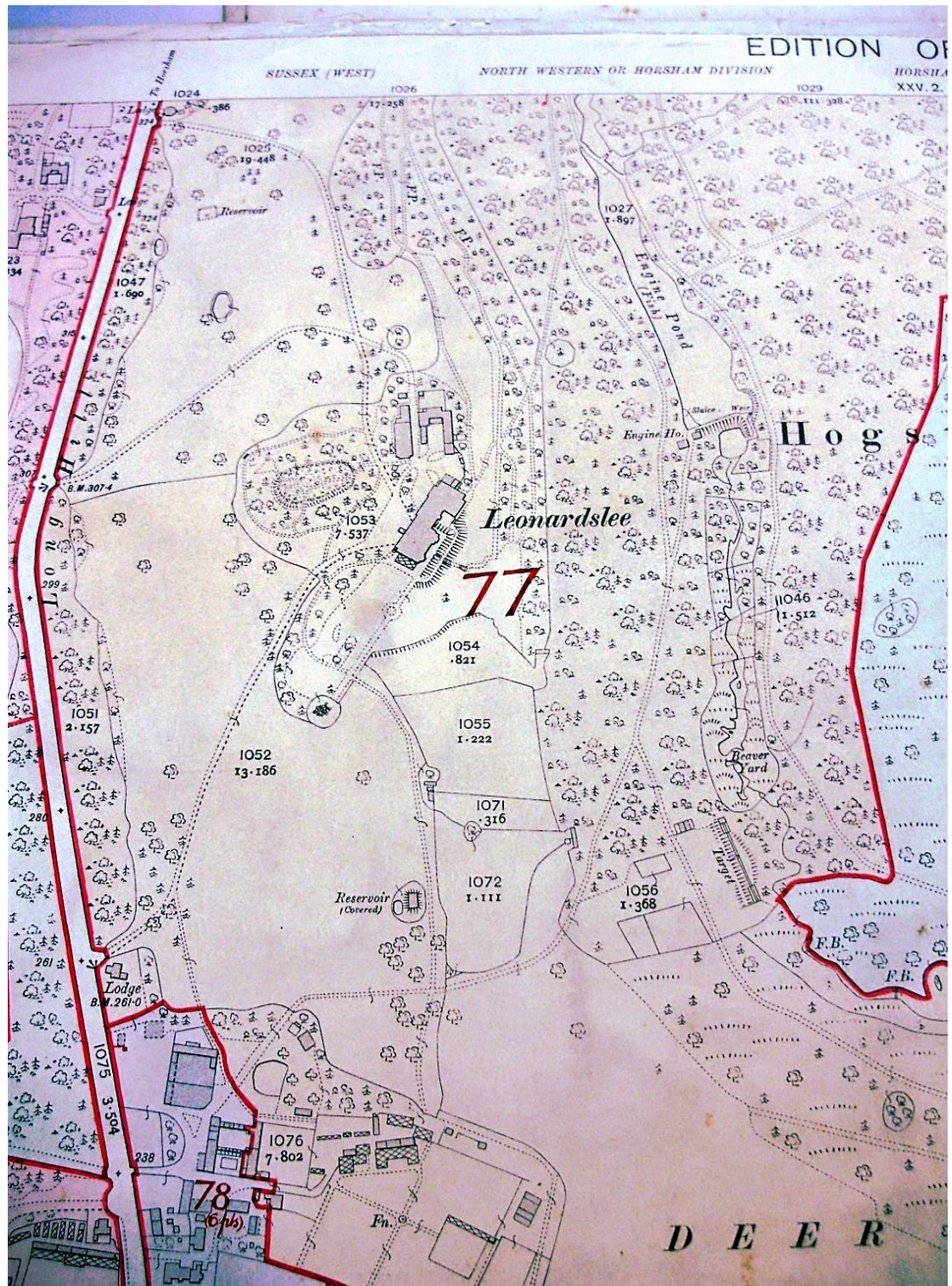


Figure 5.21: Plan of Leonardslee with beaver yard and ponds, target range, kitchen garden in the south, the museum behind the house, and rock garden to the west, from the Valuation Survey plan IR 124/9/221.

Park Farm and its 14 cottages were the next in gross value at £16,374, with fruit trees valued at £2,500. The total gross value of the whole Loder estate added up to £111,367, 10.4% of this value was in timber, with less than 3% in fruit, and so the building and the land made up the bulk of the value.¹¹¹ The Land Valuation Survey was dated 1910-15, when the estate was the most valuable in the Forest, clearly enhanced by the creation of the garden at Leonardslee. This was clearly just before the First World War and before the death duties that followed the loss of the next generation in Sir Edmund Loder's only son, Robin, in 1917, and Sir Edmund himself in 1920. In the 1924 *Country Life* article by Cox on Leonardslee, he wrote that the garden was a fitting monument to the late Sir Edmund Loder, and noted that 'his plan was the betterment of rhododendron hybrids in general and the adornment of his own woodland in particular'.¹¹²

5.2: The impact of developments in 19th century horticulture and garden design on the Forest estates.

The layout of Holmbush parkland, designed by Thomas Broadwood and his architect Francis Edwards, tends to hark back to the geometric patterns of the early 18th century before such things were swept away by the picturesque and the simplicity of the lakes and pasture parks of Capability Brown. It is suggested by Williamson that before 1750 the Italian influence was felt in the symmetry of line with prospects and terraces, sculpture, grottos and balustrading, the garden and pleasure grounds being considered together with the house for the first time. Status came from a demonstrable knowledge of classical allusion but also from the setting of a purely ornamental park. Early in the 18th century avenues planted with lime or sweet chestnut became distinctive of this period, often forming networks throughout the park with open

¹¹¹ TNA, IR 124/9/221 and IR 124/1/51, also IR 58/94086, 94087, 94089.

¹¹² Cox, E.H.M. (1924) Leonardslee. *Country Life*, July 19, 1924, p. 98.

ironwork grilles and gates set in the perimeter walls of the garden which allowed extended vistas down the length of the avenues, the widest and longest focused on the façade of the house.

All these features of an early 18th century landscape echo the manner in which Holmbush Park was laid out, although this was sometime after the influence of Capability Brown (1716-1783) which demonstrates a return to structured order around the house and a delight in gardens and pleasure grounds. Thomas Broadwood must have enjoyed his avenues, towers and prospects which were becoming more prevalent under the influence of designers such as Uvedale Price (1747-1829) and Richard Payne Knight (1750-1824).¹¹³ Williamson writes that avenues had particular symbolic significance, they demonstrated the owner's possession of all the ground over which they passed and the enclosure and control of that land. One reason that this design appealed to Broadwood, and he planted many trees to create it, was that he could ride and hunt easily on the straight avenues, getting a clear shot of deer or grouse, something that would also have appealed to Clifton Brown (see figure 5.22). Williamson writes that 'the park was a landscape moulded by every aspect of the lifestyle of the class by whom it was owned' and this became very true of this part of St. Leonard's Forest.¹¹⁴ It should also be noted that Hurst refers to a fine avenue of ancient Spanish chestnuts in the main avenue up to New Lodge, the residence of the Aldridges, in the centre of the Forest.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Everson, P. and Williamson, T. (1998) Gardens and designed landscapes, Everson, P. and Williamson, T. (eds) *The Archaeology of Landscape*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 139-165. (hereafter Everson and Williamson, 1998)

¹¹⁴ Williamson, T (1995) *Polite Landscapes, Gardens and Society in Eighteenth Century England*, Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., pp. 19-31, 140.

¹¹⁵ Hurst, 1898, pp. 148-9.



Figure 5.22: Author's photograph of the avenue from Holmbush house to site of the tower, dated April 2009.

At the beginning of the Victorian era, John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) was an influential garden designer and journalist, whose ideas impacted not only Victorian gardening taste, but improvements in the education and status of gardeners. In 1832 he wrote for the first time about a concept he called the 'gardenesque', where each plant was displayed to its best advantage without competition. Simo wrote that Loudon was 'delighted to observe the beauty of each individual young plant as it made daily progress towards its ultimate perfection of form'. Loudon had a lifelong fascination with trees and enjoyed seeing them grown as specimens in this way so that their whole growth and shape could be appreciated. Perhaps the wonderful weeping beech tree at Holmbush, which Noel Paton suggested is one of the largest in the country, was placed on the edge of the lawn to be seen and admired in just this manner (see figure 5.23).¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Simo, M.L. (1988) *Loudon and the Landscape, from country seat to metropolis 1783-1843*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, pp. 33-6, 87, 165-170, (hereafter Simo, 1988).



Figure 5.23: Author's photograph of Weeping Beech on the lawn at Holmbush, dated May 2011.

Elliott wrote that the gardenesque Victorian designs of Loudon arose as a reaction to the later 18th century landscape parks, and doubts as to what form of 'nature' was acceptable and should be followed. For example, William Gilpin (1724-1804) and his picturesque style required wild scenery with rocks or grottos artfully composed. He wrote that the picturesque was 'that kind of beauty which would look well in a picture', while John Ruskin (1819-1900) demanded nature in the raw, wild and unaffected by man.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Elliott, B. (1986) *Victorian Gardens*. London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., pp. 7-20 (hereafter Elliott, 1986) and Dixon Hunt, J. and Willis, P. (eds) (1988) *The Genius of Place, the English Landscape Garden 1620-1820*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, p. 337.

The status of the head gardener grew with the influx of exotic bedding plants and the increased skills needed to maintain them. Glass house development was important in the production of bedding plants as well as gardening journals in which to discuss the best methods of caring for and propagating the plants. W.A. Cook of Leonardslee and A. Kemp of Coolhurst were examples of these skilled and valued head gardeners. Kitchen gardens were also a feature of all of the five St. Leonard's Forest estates, and good gardening skills were essential to maintain the fruit and vegetables demanded by the Victorian household, family and staff. The kitchen gardens were separate enclosures surrounded by 10 foot walls and included glasshouses, frames and pits.

Both Coolhurst and New Lodge had kitchen gardens near to the house for convenience, suggesting they had been built before the early 18th century as later in the century it was thought preferable to have them sited away from the mansion house as by this time they were busy workplaces, full of the noise and smells of horticulture. However, Everson and Williamson suggest this has been much exaggerated, most kitchen gardens being directly accessed from the ornamental pleasure grounds as part of the principal walks from the house, and growing flowers as well as vegetables. Campbell noted that a one acre (0.4 ha) kitchen garden could feed 12 people and required two or three gardeners to maintain it. Leonardslee's kitchen garden was in fact five acres. In 1852 it was described as partly walled and clothed with fruit trees, and fifty years later *The Gardener's Chronicle* article gave a good account of how the garden was used for fruit, vegetables and flowers. Acreage of the other kitchen gardens are not noted, but the sales particulars for New Lodge in 1896 described an excellent walled kitchen garden, planted with standard and wall trained fruit trees and including a range of glass houses which were used to cultivate vines and peaches, and a mushroom house.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Everson and Williamson, 1998, pp. 139-165, and Campbell, S. (1999) *Walled Kitchen Gardens*, Princes Risborough: Shire Publications Ltd., pp. 3-9.

Coolhurst had no sales particulars to refer to, but the Land Valuation Survey of 1910-15 did have a drawing of the Coolhurst kitchen garden (see figure 5.24) showing three large brick, tile and glazed houses (A,B,C) within the garden on presumably the south facing wall, all of poor condition, and three tall 10 foot sheds (E,F,J) on the opposite wall of fair condition, two brick and glazed glass houses outside the walls (G,H), again south facing, of fair condition, and another two shed buildings outside the east wall, one of poor condition,(K) and one of fair condition (D).

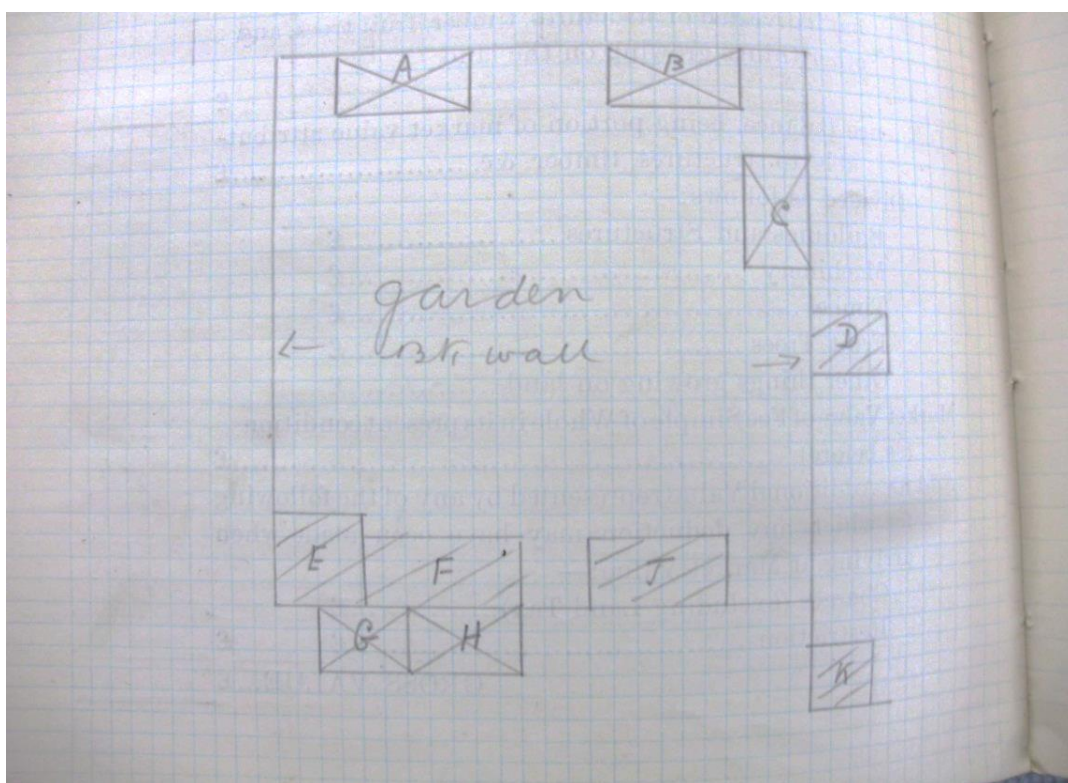


Figure 5.24: Drawing of walled garden at Coolhurst from Land Valuation Survey Field Book IR 58/94028.

Holmbush had little information about the kitchen garden apart from the fact that the Land Valuation Survey noted there were eight glasshouses and four potting sheds all of good condition. Buchan Hill had less information still but the large kitchen gardens can be seen on the 1st Edition OS map 1897 to the south of the main house. The provision and maintenance of kitchen gardens were perhaps less subject to garden fashions as the garden and park land, although exotic fruit and tender plants were reared in them.

They were, however, a necessity for providing each estate with fresh food, and as long as these estates remained and there was labour enough to work in them, they survived.¹¹⁹

The mid-19th century saw the popularity of geometric and colourful bedding schemes but also the contrast of quiet winding woodland paths through shrubberies. Collections of trees, and the more formally arranged arboretum, were noted by garden writer Jane Loudon, wife of J.C. Loudon, in 1843 as a fashionable and effective way of achieving maximum enjoyment from a minimum of space. Although the terraces and bedding are barely glimpsed at in the garden of New Lodge on the 1875 1st Edition OS map (see figure 5.10) to the south east of the mansion is a clearly marked Laurel Walk. Although this sounds quite dull, the 1896 sales particulars describe Laurel Walk Wood as an extensive tract of woodland ‘ornamented with very handsome beeches, intersected by winding walks, and charmingly planted with laurels, rhododendron etc.,’ it led down to Sheepwash Gill and the beds of wild Lily of the Valley, *Convallaria majalis*, which had established there.¹²⁰ Both Coolhurst and Leonardslee took their woodland walks to new heights in the second half of the 19th century when the organisation of arboretum gave way to a more relaxed woodland embellishment as promoted by William Robinson (1838-1935) of Gravetye in Sussex in his first book *The Wild Garden* published in 1870. This book advocated the ‘naturalising or making wild innumerable beautiful natives of many regions of the earth in our woods, wild and semi-wild places’.¹²¹

However, it appears that it was not so much the new appreciation of gentler, naturalistic planting in woodland and border that was being applied at Coolhurst and Leonardslee, but rather a scientific enquiry regarding new plants and the possibilities

¹¹⁹ Campbell, 1999, pp. 3-9 and HM, SP230; *The Gardeners Chronicle*, 1906, and TNA, IR 124/9/114 and IR 58/94087.

¹²⁰ Horsham Museum, SP 230.

¹²¹ Elliott, 1986, p. 94, and Elliott, P., Watkins, C. Daniels, S. (2007) ‘Combining Science with recreation and Pleasure’: Cultural Geographies of nineteenth-century arboretums, *Garden History*, Vol. 35: Supplement 2, pp. 6-27, (hereafter Elliott *et al*, 2007).

for their care, maintenance and improvements in the climate and geology of their portion of Sussex, St. Leonards Forest. At Coolhurst, Scrase-Dickins had hybridised successfully *Lillium croceum* and experimented with growing what were thought to be tender varieties of camellia and azalea in his woodland. Although he was a naturalist and horticulturist, as were his near neighbours the Loders, Millais, du Cane Godmans and Stephenson-Clarke, he does not appear to have mixed easily with them socially or professionally, possibly because he was not of the hunting and shooting fraternity. Also, both Millais and Loder were particular experts in the rhododendron. John Guille Millais (1865-1931) produced a seminal book on the subject *Rhododendrons and their Hybrids* published in 1917 after many years of work in his 16 acre garden at Compton's Brow on the north east edge of St. Leonard's Forest. In the preface to this book he acknowledged the 'tutelage of my friend and neighbour, Sir Edmund Loder, who at all times has given me the benefit of his great knowledge of the genus'. Millais advocated less space in a garden given to lawns, borders, roses and herbaceous plants and more space given to beds and woodland walks of flowering shrubs, exactly what had been developed at Coolhurst and Leonardslee.¹²²

The naturalist F. du Cane Godman lived opposite the gates of Leonardslee at South Park, and his interest was in collecting rare plants including the rhododendron, and developing orchids and carnations. In 1895 a journalist for the *The Gardeners' Chronicle* wrote of seeing not only a large and pretty rock garden but a 'lofty winter garden filled with giant specimens of Indian rhododendrons and their hybrids already exhibiting many hundreds of large trusses of delightfully fragrant flowers'. It is interesting that Pease noted that in fact the Loderi hybrids were developed from crosses of 'exceptionally fine sweet-scented *R. fortunei* and a very large flowered *R. Griffianthium* that existed in Mr Fred Godman's green-house at South Lodge'. Perhaps

¹²² Watson, J.N.P. (1988) *Millais: Three Generations in Nature, Art and Sport*, London: The Sportsman's Press, pp. 116-7, 164-5.

it is not surprising that this group of enthusiasts shared their plants as well as their knowledge.¹²³

Goodliffe had mentioned the fine woods at Coolhurst and specified particular outstanding trees, however this was the only garden of the five St. Leonard's Forest estates that had been described as an arboretum, and this was by Goldring in his article in *The Garden*, 1887, as noted earlier in the chapter, in which he wrote that this was the 'glory' of Coolhurst garden. Clearly, Leonardslee also had a collection of exotic trees which began with Beauclerk's American garden early in the 19th century, but it is not certain it was ever scientifically arranged and called an arboretum. Laird pointed out that American gardens were a development from mid-18th century shrubberies which were planted with newly imported North American flowering trees and shrubs, and were perhaps the precursor to the 'wild garden' of Robinson. The American shrubs included magnolia, kalmia, azalea and rhododendron as well as cistus, arbutus and ericas, all of which were at home on the slightly acid and increasingly humus rich soil of St. Leonard's Forest.¹²⁴

Arboretum gained in popularity from the 1830s encouraged by J.C. Loudon's great work on trees called the *Arboretum et Fruticetum Britannicum*, published in eight volumes in 1838. As Jane Loudon had recommended, arboretums were regarded as suitable additions to private gardens, as well as parks and botanical gardens as they were collections of both deciduous and evergreen trees, mainly exotic, one specimen of each and systematically displayed in order to better study the acclimatisation and growth of the trees. J. C. Loudon, who designed the Derby public arboretum which opened in 1840, also recommended growing native trees with exotics, as specimens in the gardenesque style for aesthetics as well as scientific enquiry. William Robinson

¹²³ Anon., (1895) South Park, *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, Vol. **XVII** Third Series Jan-June 1895, April 20 1895, London, Covent Garden, p. 485 and (1906) Vol. **39**, Third Series Jan-June 1906, pp. 98-9, and Pease, 1923, p. 305.

¹²⁴ Laird, M. (1991) Approaches to planting in the late eighteenth century: some imperfect ideas on the origins of the American garden. *Journal of Garden History*, Vol. **11** No. 3, pp. 154-172.

voiced the reaction against these collections of exotic trees and claimed that many of the finest native varieties were not grown whilst money was thrown away on worthless exotic trees like the *Sequoia wellingtonia*.¹²⁵

Tree collecting had of course preceded the fashion of arboretum but the new species which increasingly came into Britain from the late 18th century encouraged this trend towards arboretum which became particularly popular from the 1830s. For example, when the American pacific conifers were introduced by David Douglas (1799-1834) and later by William Lobb (1809-1864) they caught the enthusiasms of landowners. In the Sussex Weald, Borde Hill, Sheffield Park, Nymans and Wakehurst all participated in the collection of exotic trees in the latter part of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th until the First World War closed borders and trade. Elliott *et al* considered arboretums to be one of the most important developments in landscape gardening in the 19th century. They suggested that as the Victorians and Edwardians strolled in a public park or through their own estate 'they reaffirmed a beautifully ordered conception of nature, whilst partaking of the triumphs of science, commerce and exploration, conquest and empire'.¹²⁶

5.3: Conclusion

The sales particulars of those estates or parts of estates, which were sold in the late 19th century, demonstrate the influence that the growth and urbanisation of London had on Sussex, combined with the accessibility due to the development of the railways. It drew in new wealth to the estates in St. Leonard's Forest, with new ideas of what they desired from their land. Their interests, be that hunting and shooting, building towers or hybridising new plants, had a considerable impact on the landscape of the Forest through the creation of long rides, woodland gardens and the introduction of exotic shrubs. Not everything has remained but the continual presence

¹²⁵ Hadfield, M. (1967) *Landscape with Trees*, London: Country Life Ltd., pp. 139, 155-183, and Quest-Ritson, 2003, pp. 203-4, and Elliott *et al*, 2007, pp. 6-27.

¹²⁶ Elliott *et al*, 2007, pp. 6-27.

of *Rhododendron ponticum* which naturalised as early as the 1840s is a reminder of the passion for rhododendrons in the Victorian and Edwardian period.

However, it was not only the interests of the landowners that impacted on the Forest. The presence of the large estates and households created a demand for labour and consequently an increase in the population in what had been a very empty landscape. The next chapter will therefore look at the development of the two villages in the Forest, Colgate and Lower Beeding, the concerns of the clergy, church building and the paternalism of the landowners in developing these villages. Finally, it will consider early 20th century tensions between private and public access to the Forest as demonstrated by the 1900 Footpath Dispute.

CHAPTER 6

Village and Church in the Forest 1830 to 1914

From the churchyard run twelve footpaths; some ending at farmhouses close by; some losing themselves in the nearest road; one leading nowhere, nor of any use today, since the house that drew it thither across the wheat is under the cow-parsley and grass; one going on without end....,

From Edward Thomas, *The Village IV*. 1906 ¹

The change from a scattering of small farms, houses and huts throughout the Forest to two nucleated and growing villages, Colgate, and Lower Beeding, was a major landscape change which occurred during the latter part of the 19th century. This chapter will therefore examine the development of these two villages within St. Leonard's Forest. In order to do this, the establishment of three churches, and a new parish to service the growing population, will be considered, and then a comparison made of the censuses of 1841, 1871 and 1901. The Ordnance Survey maps of 1879 (which had been surveyed from the 1840s), and 1899 will also be compared, and conclusions drawn as to the meaning and impact of the population increases on the Forest landscape. The Land Valuation Survey of 1910-15 will be consulted as a useful source of information on ownership and occupation of the villages at the end of the study period. Concerns with interpretation and comparisons of these types of data are dealt with in Chapter 2 'Methodology and Sources'.²

Towards the end of the 19th century, philanthropy and a concern for public health and welfare began to combine with an awareness of the importance of countryside and heritage. This chapter therefore concludes with an outline of a fascinating Forest footpaths dispute which went before the High Court in 1900. Through recorded

¹ Thomas, E. (2009) *One Green Field*, London: Penguin Books Ltd., p. 65. A selection of pieces taken from *The Heart of England* (1906) and *The South Country* (1909).

² Higgs, E. (2005) *Making Sense of the Census Revisited*, University of London with The National Archives of the UK, pp. 3-23, 37-41 (hereafter Higgs, 2005) Short, B. (1997) *Land and Society in Edwardian Britain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 109-152

evidence this looks back to consider the normal everyday practice of local people walking through the Forest, and forward to the conflict between private property and public access over the Forest.

In comparison to the owners of the wealthy Forest estates, the workers and the poor had little impact on the landscape of St. Leonard's Forest; although it could be said that they did energise the concerned moral guardians of the local middle class to establish Anglican churches and schools in the Forest for their benefit. They also settled in the villages and supplied the labour, they were the gardeners and gamekeepers, the cooks and the coachmen for the big estates. However, it was the towns and not the Forest that increased in population in the latter part of this period. Despite the fact that the clergy had been worried about increasing population in the wilds of the Forest at the beginning of the 19th century, this was not to last and people drifted away from unproductive smallholdings in the Forest, as will become clear in this chapter.

6.1: The Forest Villages

a) Churches, schools, parish boundaries and population.

In the 1830s Horsfield described the Parish of Beeding, or Sele as it was also known after the priory in Beeding, as a very extensive parish that was divided in two parts, the northern part was separated from the southern part by eight or nine miles and was known as Lower Beeding. It was called 'Lower' even though it was geographically the northern part as in ecclesiastical terms the original medieval chapel in the Forest was a mission of Sele Priory and therefore a lower house, so the Upper and Lower refers to status rather than geography, although Upper was only applied to the civil parish in the late 19th century, the ecclesiastical parish still being known as Beeding. Horsfield described the northern part, or Lower Beeding, also referred to as St. Leonard's Forest, as 'wild and sterile' when he was writing in the 1830s and he clearly regarded it as a rather desolate empty Forest. However, the population was growing and according to the decennial census statistics from Lower Beeding, taken from the registration district

of Horsham, there was a 370% increase in population over the 50 years; from a population of 230 in 1801, to a population of 1081 in 1851.³ This local growth in population worried the clergy as there was no church in the northern part of the extensive parish of Beeding. The nearest churches were in Horsham, Cowfold, Nuthurst, Rusper and Ifield, all bordering parishes with their own churches and clergy. The clergy of these parishes wrote that they were particularly concerned by the lack of a church at Lower Beeding, not only because it meant that they were called upon to assist over a wide and rough area, but also due to their fear for the moral state of the residents of the Forest who were unable to attend church, or receive the 'blessings of a resident pastor'. It seems likely that they were also aware of the growing popularity of nonconformist chapels which could encroach on their congregations, status and control.⁴

At the beginning of the 19th century there was concern generally in England about the growing population and the lack of religious provision, particularly in London and the new industrial towns of the north, but also in the Sussex coastal towns of Brighton and Hastings. Concern was such that in 1818 The Church Building Act was passed in which state funding was made available under the guidance of Commissioners to identify gaps and build new churches. Under this Act 214 churches were built and £6 million spent by the Commissioners in what were known as Commissioners Churches. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that the vicars of Horsham, Cowfold, Nuthurst, Rusper

³ For population figures see Page, W. (ed.) (1973) Social and Economic History, Table of Population, 1801 to 1901, *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex*, Vol. II, The Institute of Historical Research by University of London, pp. 215-228 (hereafter VCH, II). Notes acknowledge that the 1801 boundaries of civil parishes, although virtually co-terminus with the ecclesiastical parishes could be affected by the Divided Parishes Acts of 1876, 1879 and 1882 which dealt with detached parts of civil parishes, as well as the Local Government Act 1888 which altered and amalgamated civil parishes. Upper Beeding and Horsham appear to have been affected by the Divided Parishes Acts but not every detail of change was obtained, thus figures for 1891 and 1901 were difficult to ascertain and were partially estimated.

⁴ Magdalen College, Oxford archives, MS 741 Correspondence, and Horsfield, T.W. (1835) *The History, Antiquities and Topography of the County of Sussex*, Vol. II, Lewes: Sussex Press, p. 222, (hereafter Horsfield, 1835). For population figures VCH, II, pp. 215-228 and Vickers, J.A. (1989) *The Religious Census of Sussex 1851*, 75, Lewes: Sussex Record Society, p. 123 (hereafter Vickers, 1989). See note at 3.

and Ifield thought the time was right to press for a new church in Lower Beeding itself.⁵

These particular clergy therefore wrote a joint letter in the 1820s, the specific date was not noted on the letter, to the President and Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford, who were responsible for the advowson and tithes of the Forest, requesting that a pastor and regular religious instruction be provided in order to prevent the residents of the Forest from suffering a 'daily descent into moral depravity'. The Rev. H.J. Rose of Horsham parish followed this up with a letter in 1822 stating that a church was desirable and he suggested a site and offered to start a subscription for funding. Magdalen College was perhaps concerned by the cost of this and so looked to the tithes that they were clearly not receiving from Lower Beeding. Cartwright had noted that 1300 acres of Holmbush and Bewbush paid tithes but as for the rest of the Forest, no tithes had been claimed, as in the past a buck and doe were given annually to the vicar of Beeding in lieu of tithes, although the *Victoria County History* noted that this was commuted to between two and ten guineas in the 17th century.⁶

The result was a demand for tithes from Magdalen College to the landowners in St. Leonard's Forest who had not previously been paying. In September 1834 an alphabetical list was produced by the college of 25 landowners in the area, the largest being the Aldridges at New Lodge and the Broadwoods at Holmbush. Against each name was the type of land owned, whether arable, pasture or heath, the acreage of that land, and the annual tithe due. For example, the first landowner noted is Robert Aldridge at New Lodge and farm with a total of 1060 acres, 57 acres of this being arable, 30 acres new pasture, 125 acres old pasture or park, 10 acres of meadow, 18 acres of pasture, 20 acres deer park and 800 acres of heathland, for all of which a tithe was calculated to be £25 16s 6d. Added to the main Aldridge landholding was Millfield

⁵ Elleray, D.R. (1981) *The Victorian Churches of Sussex*, Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., pp. 2-3, (hereafter Elleray, 1981), and Snell, K.D.M. (2006) *Parish and Belonging: Community, identity and welfare in England and Wales 1700 – 1950*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 393-405.

⁶ Magdalen College, Oxford archives, MS 741 Correspondence and notes, also Cartwright, E. (1830) *The Parochial Topography in the Western Division of the County of Sussex*, Vol. II, London: J.B. Nichols & Son, p. 365, and Hudson, T.P. (ed.) (1986) *Victoria County History of Sussex*, Vol. VI Pt. 3, p. 26, Institute of Historical Research by Oxford University Press, p. 26 (hereafter VCH VI.3).

Farm, 45 acres of arable with a tithe of £6 15s 0d and Holm Farm, 100 acres of arable and six acres of meadow attracting a tithe of £13 2s 0d, making a total demand of £45 13s 6d, which would be about £2,260.46 at 2005 values.⁷ So it is little surprise that the landowners suddenly presented with this sort of annual bill objected strongly, particularly as there were no churches or services being provided for such tithes. The total demand from the College from all the landowners was £252 17s 9d which again at 2005 values was estimated at £12,515.40. However, tithes as a method of taxation were becoming increasingly anachronistic and the cause of disputes. The Whig government thus introduced the 1836 Tithe Commutation Act which efficiently systematised the conversion of tithes into a rent-charge payment. The amount was agreed between landowners and assistant commissioners based on the price of grain, wheat, barley and oats, as published annually in the *London Gazette*.⁸

One solution to the Forest tithe dispute was either the creation of an ecclesiastical parish of Lower Beeding with tithes being paid when a church was erected and endowed, or the establishment of a Chapelry for the outlying areas of Beeding parish. So in 1838 a Private Bill was introduced in the House of Lords for the erection and endowment of a Chapelry for the district of Lower Beeding, meaning a chapel of ease, or new church, to service the outlying parts of the parish of Beeding at Lower Beeding. However, it appeared that Thomas Broadwood at Holmbush did not agree with this solution as he excluded Holmbush, Kilnwood and Bewbush from the new chapelry of Lower Beeding by his own private Act of Parliament. This portion was known as Upper Beeding detached, or the Bewbush tithing, a small area of 1542 acres (see figure 6.1). The reason for wanting this exclusion is unclear, he did have his own small chapel at Colgate where services were occasionally held for family and tenants, but it is likely he

⁷ The National Archives currency converter is no longer being updated, but for these figures the conversion was made from 1830 to 2005, which gives an indication of today's values. Accessible through: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency

⁸ Magdalen College, Oxford archives, MS 741 Correspondence, and Kain, R.J.P. and Oliver, R.R. (1995) *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 513-7, and Kain, R.J.P. and Prince, H.C. (1985) *The Tithe surveys of England and Wales*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 28-67, and Evans, J.E. and Crosby, A.G. (1978, 1997) *Tithes, Maps, Apportionment and the 1836 Act: a guide for local historians*, Salisbury: British Association for Local History, pp. 12-29.

would have attended the larger St. Mary Magdalen church at Rusper which was attended by his relations at Lyne House. Generally, Victorian landowners were keen to add to their status and prestige by generous endowments to the local church or chapel, so it is surprising that Broadwood did not do this at Colgate. However, this task was taken on with great enthusiasm after 1868 by the next resident of the Holmbush estate, James Clifton Brown.⁹

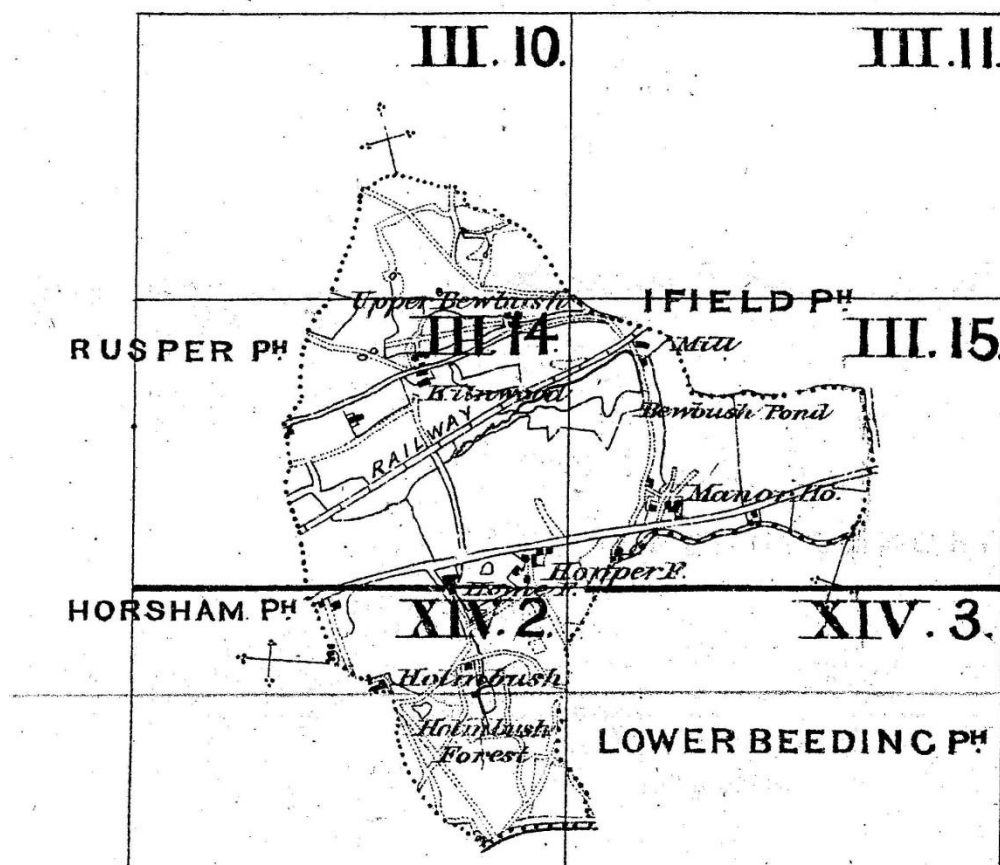


Figure 6.1: Map of the Parish of Upper Beeding (Detached), index to sheets, OS 1875 showing surrounding parishes and area of the Holmbush estate.

The situation of the split parish of Beeding could not have been satisfactory from an ecclesiastical point of view, particularly as there was no church in Bewbush detached

⁹ HL/PO/PB/1/1838/1&2 V1n 110, accessible though: www.portcullis.parliament.uk and VCH VI.3, p. 26, and Baldwin, M. (ed.)(1985) *The Story of the Forest, Parish of Colgate*, pp. 1-3, (hereafter Baldwin, 1985).

tithing, and it was at some distance away from the main parish church, St. Peter's at Beeding. Most references agree, and the Religious Census of Sussex 1851 confirms, that the Parish of Lower Beeding was separated from the older parish of Beeding under the authority of a local Act of Parliament September 1837-8 and the Church of the Holy Trinity at Plummers Plain, Lower Beeding village, was built as the parish church and consecrated in June 1840.

A year earlier, under the same Act, a chapel of ease to the new parish church had been established at Coolhurst. Lewis noted that the chapel, dedicated to St. John, was erected on the Coolhurst Estate in 1839, at the expense of Charles Scrase-Dickins, who also gave the site which included the cemetery. The site lay to the north of the Coolhurst estate on Hammerpond road, just west of the entrance to the Aldridge estate and the Sun Oak, thus being convenient to the family and staff of both estates. In Hurst it is noted that Robert Aldridge also contributed to the cost of building St. John's church. The land had in fact been given by Scrase-Dickins' mother-in-law, the Marchioness of Northampton, and the building financed by Charles Scrase- Dickins and Robert Aldridge, so it had been planned before the Act of 1838 to build a chapel financed by the two families.

Having been built before the parish church, it was always well used and became known as the Forest Church, although remaining a dependant chapel of ease, served by the same vicar of the parish church without further stipend. At the turn of the century Goodliffe describes the church as forming a charming picture in its woodland surroundings (see figure 6.2). The 1851 Religious Census gives the average attendance at St. John's the same as the parish church of the Holy Trinity at 200 people.¹⁰

¹⁰ Vickers, 1989, p. 123 and Lewis, S. (ed.)(1848) *A Topographical Dictionary of England*, pp. 194-9, and Hurst, D.E. (1889) *The History and Antiquities of Horsham*, 2nd ed., Lewes: Farncombe & Co., p. 162, (hereafter Hurst, 1889) and Goodliffe, W. (1905) *Horsham and St. Leonard's Forest with their surroundings*, London: The Homeland Association, p. 48, (hereafter Goodliffe, 1905).

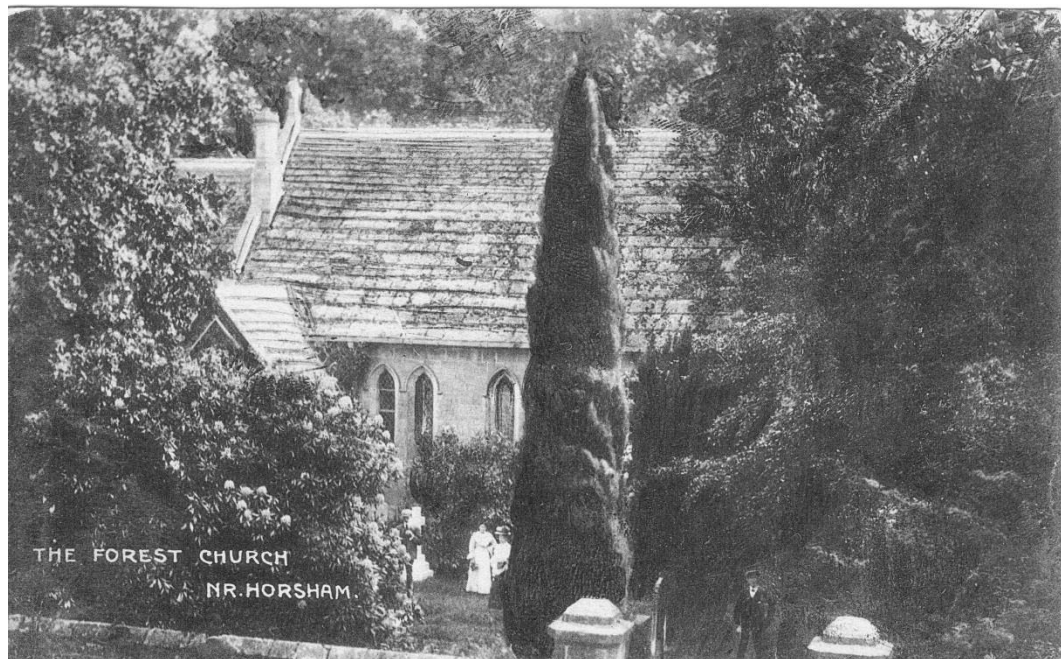


Figure 6.2: Post card in author's collection showing St. John's Church and parishioners, post mark date on reverse is unclear but dress would indicate late 19th century or early 20th century.

The Scrase-Dickins family continued to support the church through the following generations. Hurst wrote that it was enlarged in 1889 by C. R. Scrase-Dickins, grandson of the founder and in memory of his father, through the addition of a new chancel and north aisle. Archival evidence shows that permission was sought from the Bishop of Chichester by the Rev. C.B. Knox, and the churchwardens Robert Aldridge and William E. Hubbard and also C.R. Scrase-Dickins on behalf of themselves and the other parishioners. It was agreed in the parish vestry meeting of 2nd April 1888 to take down the existing chancel and erect a new larger one, to erect an organ chamber on the north side of the chancel and a vestry on the south side, to construct new roofs to the nave transepts and porch. Also to renew all the seating, the communion table, choir and clergy stalls, reading desk and pulpit, and to generally restore the interior and exterior. This was a considerable amount of work, and to justify this request the petition stated that the population of the parish was 848, of which about 30 resided near the church of St. John. They wrote that the attendances amounted to 230, but the renovation would see this number increased by 10. The cost was estimated to be

£3,300 and the whole cost of this would be paid by C.R. Scrase-Dickins. This proposal was accepted, and plans drawn up by the architect John Oldrid Scott (see figure 6.3).¹¹

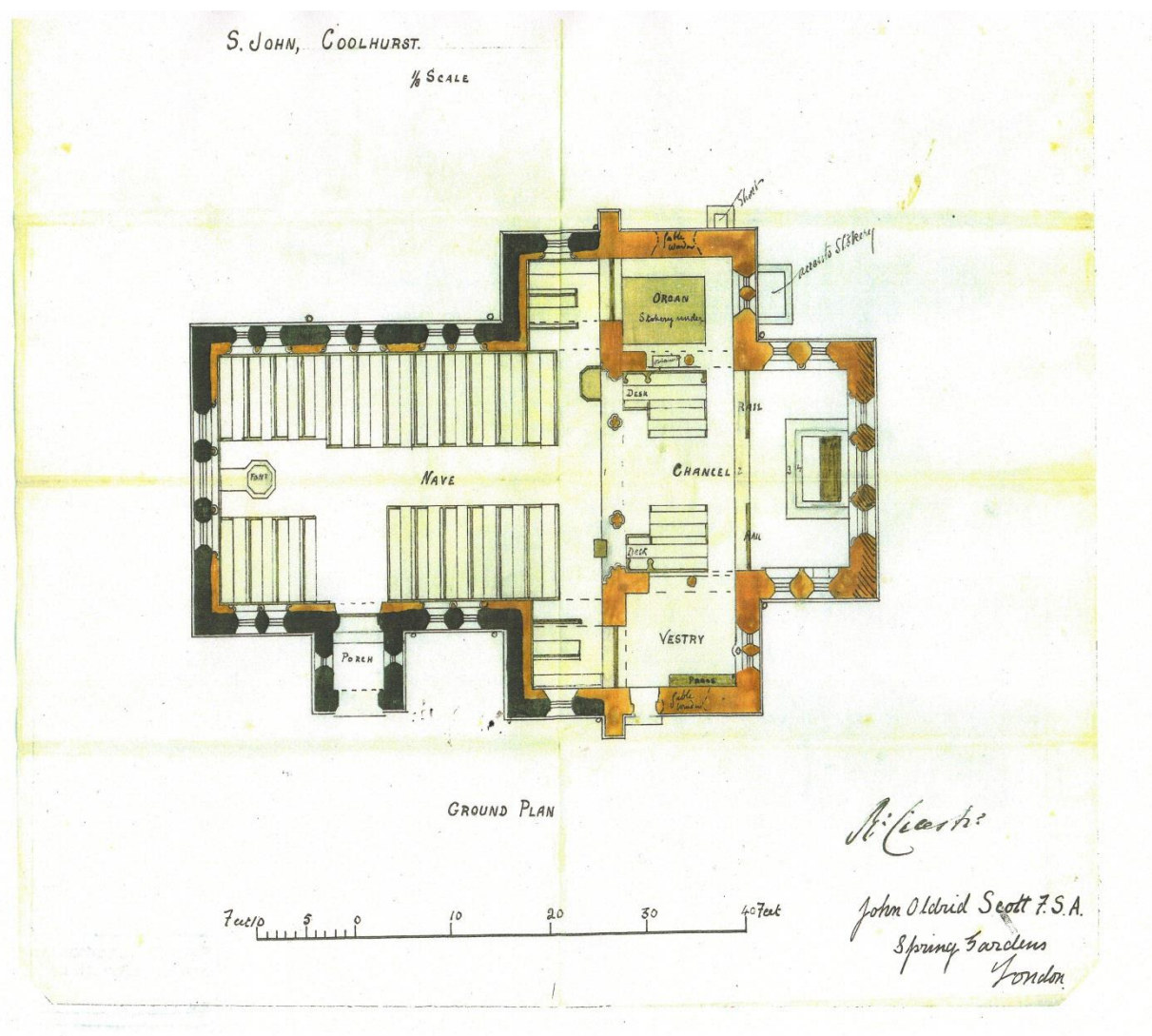


Figure 6.3: Scott's plan for St. John's church at Coolhurst, undated but approximately 1889 when refitting started. WSRO, EPISC II/27/273.

¹¹ Hurst, 1889, p. 162, and West Sussex Record Office (WSRO) MS EPISC II/27/273

In 1840 the new parish church of Holy Trinity was erected at Lower Beeding village, on Plummers Plain on the Handcross to Horsham road. Lewis recorded in the late 1840s that the church had been paid for by subscription aided by a grant from the Incorporated Society, although it is not clear who the members of such a society were. The *Victoria County History* noted that the building of the church was paid for by a levy of £1000 on landowners and occupiers of the new parish of Lower Beeding, although Elleray identifies it as one of the 'Commissioners' Churches' paid for out of government funding. It is probable that a combination of both public and private money contributed to its building. Lewis described the church as a 'neat edifice' which contained 200 sittings, half of which were free. The living was endowed with a rent charge on land of £135, and was at that point in the gift of the President and Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford who built a parsonage on 20 acres. Hurst noted that the land for the church was given by Robert Aldridge for this purpose. The architect was H.J. Underwood from Oxford who based the gothic design on SS. Mary and Nicholas in Littlemore, Oxford, with large lancets and a stone belfry with a small spire but no chancel. In 1861 the advowson, or living, and the rent charge was bought from Magdalen College by W.E. Hubbard of Leonardslee who immediately set about improving the church.¹²

According to *The Builder* in their church building news in 1863, the greater part of the rebuilding was at the sole expense of W.E. Hubbard and executed by the London architect W.G. Habershon, and Mr Patman a builder. The stained glass was executed by a Mr. Wailes of Newcastle. Two side aisles were added and lengthened towards the west end to increase the number of sittings. Double pillars of Purbeck marble were introduced with capitals of Ancaster stone carved with fruit and flowers. The ends of the hammer beams in the roof were decorated with shields painted with a variety of 'ecclesiastical devices' by Mrs Hubbard herself. The triple stained glass window in the chancel was donated by Ms Hubbard, the sister of W.E. Hubbard, and probably Louise

¹² Lewis, 1848, pp. 148-199, and VCH, VI.3, p.27 and Elleray, 1981, pp. 71, 167.

Hubbard. Those on the north and south were given by the Boldero family in memory of Henry Boldero of South Lodge, the prior occupier to F. De Cane Godman.¹³

Goodliffe refers to Holy Trinity at the turn of the century as a modern church, noting that in 1884 a tower was added with a peal of eight bells as a memorial to Mr and Mrs W.E. Hubbard by their children, and four years later an automatic barrel organ was added, again by the Hubbard family. The parish church thus became very closely associated with the Hubbards, it was almost their own personal church, improved and maintained by them, for the family. Hurst was much impressed by the first incumbent, the Rev. John Montague Cholmeley, a fellow of Magdalen College, who she described as an 'indefatigable worker in the parish', holding Sunday services and walking five miles through the Forest from one church to another to hold weekday services. When Cholmeley moved on he was replaced by another Magdalen College fellow. It was normal practice that the livings of both Beeding (Rev. Dr J.R. Bloxham) and Lower Beeding went to fellows of Magdalen College Oxford while they held control of the advowson and rent charge.¹⁴

In 1871 it was proposed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners that the contiguous portions of the parishes of Beeding or Sele, Lower Beeding and Horsham parishes be formed into a Consolidated Chapelry for all ecclesiastical purposes and assigned to the Church of Saint Saviour at Colgate. This was agreed by the Queen in Council on 21 December 1871 and the Chapelry or Parish now included the detached portion of the parish of Beeding which covered Bewbush, Kilnwood and Holmbush. The boundary of the new Chapelry was described in great detail in the *London Gazette* of December 22 1871. It ran from Faygate south through Colgate brickworks, south west to High Birch Gate and south down through Mick Mills Race towards Hawkins pond past Great Grounds Farm and Tattleton Farm to Hammer pond and then north again past Newstead Farm and across Shelley Plain to Pease Pottage, following the detached

¹³ *The Builder*, 1863, Jan 3, pp. 14-15

¹⁴ Goodliffe, 1905, p. 66 and Hurst, 1889, pp. 161-2

Beeding portion to arrive back at Faygate. Two boundary stones, inscribed 'CCC 1871', were set at certain points on the southern boundary, and the village of Colgate was encompassed in this new parish or Chapelry (see figure 6.4).¹⁵

Mrs Elizabeth Calvert wrote in Baldwin's centenary memorial booklet to the church and village that when her grandfather, Col. J. Clifton Brown, moved to Holmbush after Thomas Broadwood, his 'earliest thoughts were to plan for the building of a church in Colgate'. The cost of the building was £5000 and this was gathered from subscriptions, although the bulk of the cost was borne by Clifton Brown who consequently became the patron and had the gift of the living and rent charge which descended through the family. Hurst wrote that Clifton Brown re-built the church, enlarging and improving it and also built a vicarage at this own expense.¹⁶

The church was consecrated by the Bishop of Chichester on Wednesday, November 22nd 1871 and newspaper reports of the time note that 30 clergy from the local neighbourhood took part with a congregation of about 300, including the wealthy local families of the Clifton Browns, Aldridges, Hursts and Sanctuaries. The Rev. G.T. Boddy of Horsham parish led the morning prayers and he later became the first incumbent in 1872. The Rev. Dr J.R. Bloxham of Beeding, who archived this information, read the first lesson. The church was described by newspaper reports as 'neat and pretty little edifice' two thirds of which was new and included an enclosed burial ground.¹⁷

¹⁵ Magdalen College, Oxford, MS 741 papers including plan of proposed parochial district and cutting from *London Gazette*, December 22nd, 1871 pp. 5720-1.

¹⁶ Baldwin, 1985, pp 1-2.

¹⁷ Hurst, 1889, p. 163, and Magdalen College, Oxford, MS 741, newspaper cutting unreferenced.

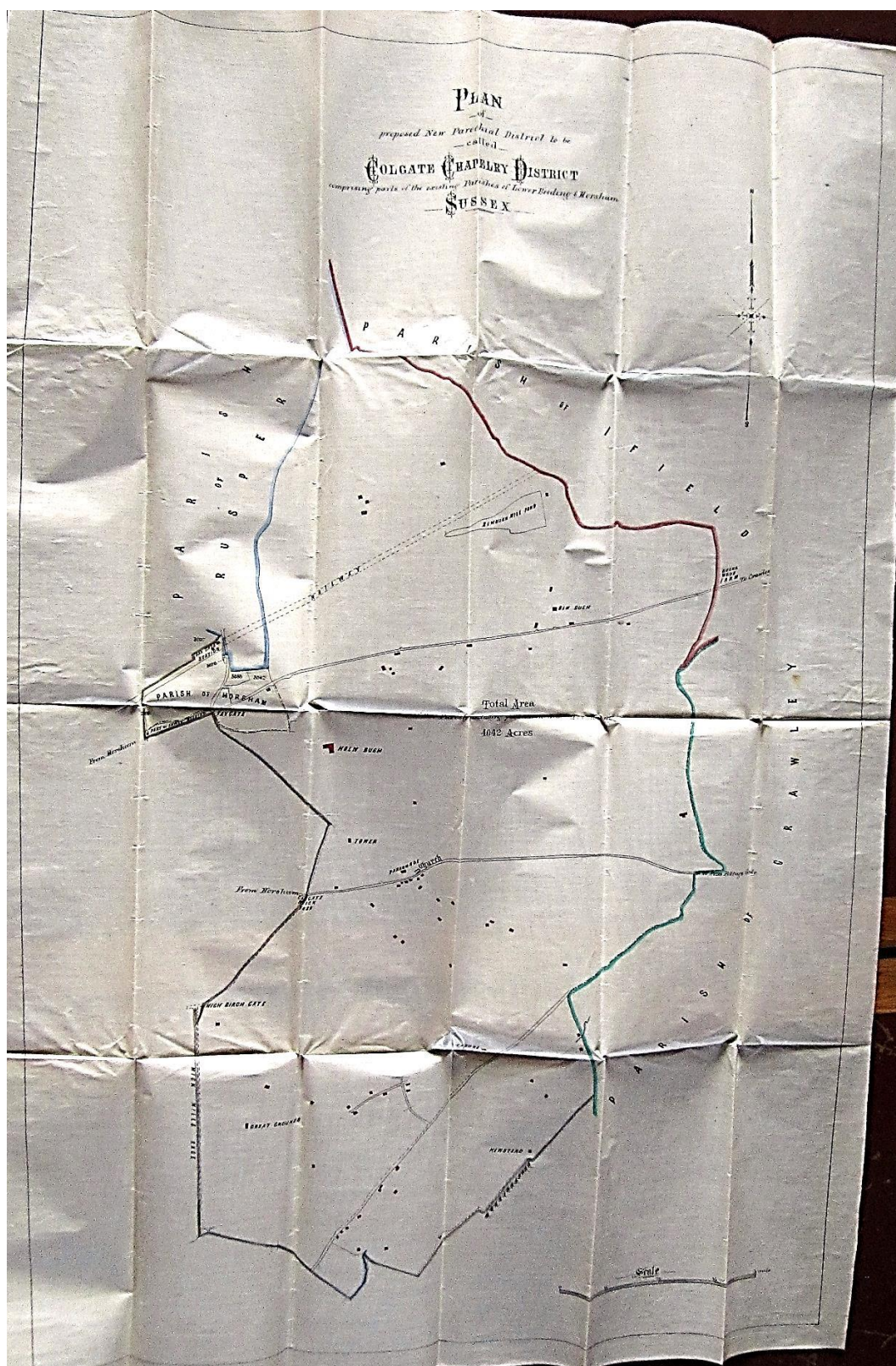


Figure 6.4: Map of the proposed new Colgate Chapelry dated 1871 on waxed paper and included in the Rev. J.R. Bloxam archives, reproduced by permission of The President and Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford.

The Returns of the Diocese of Chichester Articles of Visitation and Enquiry of the Holy Trinity parish church at Lower Beeding made in September 1875 queried the condition of the parish, with the questions answered by the vicar Rev. J.H. Masters. From a population of Lower Beeding in 1871 of 820 he estimated his congregation was about 150 but noted 'it very much depends on the weather as the parish is so scattered' and he hoped this number was increasing. Figures for communion were an average of 42, with 32 that Christmas Day. His answers appear quite positive although much seems to be wishful thinking, for example, he thought there had been an increase over the previous 10 years in marriage and baptism and a decrease in illegitimacy although he gave no figures. He estimated 111 had attended for confirmation classes but found it difficult to estimate how many of these were regular attenders as 'so many leave home for service it is impossible to say' indicating much of the employment in the parish for young people was in domestic service outside the parish. Towards the end of the questionnaire he was asked whether certain conditions had improved since he became the incumbent of the parish. There followed a long list of conditions including matrimony, number of illegitimate children, drunkenness, education, morals in general and the physical condition of the working class, to which he answered 'yes' to all, perhaps unsurprisingly.¹⁸

The results of the Religious Census of 1851 had alarmed the established church and state. Behind the facade of conventional religious attendance lay a crisis of faith that continued to grow. Vickers raised the point that the Victorians took religion seriously even if a growing percentage of the population were not particularly religious. An example of this was the growing movement for reform of the Church of England towards a higher church, particularly in rural areas. This was the Oxford movement and the parishes of Lower Beeding and Beeding with their incumbents from Magdalen College, Oxford, such as the Rev. Dr Bloxham, friend of Cardinal Newman, must have been leading promoters of this Anglo Catholic movement. At the same time there had been a slowly increasing popularity of Methodism and other nonconformist Christian religions which in itself had political overtones. The High Anglican Church was

¹⁸ WSRO EPI/22A/2/562.

associated with the Tories and the landowning classes in the country, while the dissenter chapels were associated with the Liberals and the working classes in the industrialised cities.

The 1851 Religious Census was designed to provide an overview of church provision, attendance and religious allegiance. There was opposition from within the Anglican Church who felt threatened by possible inaccuracies and misinterpretations. However, the count went ahead and although there were statistical problems with ambiguities, gaps and double counting, the results were alarming to the generally held view that England was a religious, church-going, Anglican country. What was discovered was that attenders at Anglican churches were under half the total of all attenders, and of the total population less than half were church-goers of any denomination, and urban areas had the lowest attendance of all.¹⁹

At the time of this census in 1851 St. Saviours at Colgate had not been built and consecrated, the census thus only dealt with Holy Trinity at Lower Beeding and St. John's at Coolhurst. The census recorded that the parish church of Holy Trinity had accommodation of 200 sittings with 135 attending morning service and 185 the afternoon, while at St. John's, accommodating 200, attendance of 130 in the morning and 165 in the afternoon on alternative Sundays. It was recorded that there was a Bethel chapel at Crabtree, built in 1835 for Particular Baptists, the building also being used as a day school. Attendances at the chapel were quite respectable with 50 in the morning and 60 in the afternoon. In Lower Beeding nonconformist chapels appear to have been built more towards the end of the century according to the Directories and Ordnance Survey maps. Kelly's Directory of Sussex 1899 states that the Mars Hill Baptist Chapel was built in 1890 of brick and had 100 sittings, and the 1897 OS map shows it opposite St. Saviour's church (see figure 6.6).²⁰ The 1897 map also shows a

¹⁹ Elleray, 1981, pp. 1-7, and Vickers, 1989, pp. 118-124..

²⁰ Mars Hill is an English translation of the Greek 'Areopagus' which was the rock where the Apostle Paul preached to the Athenians (Acts 17 v 19-27), also Kelly's Directory of Sussex 1899 accessible through: www.historicdirectores.org

Methodist chapel nearby at Faygate in a terrace of cottages called The Carylls, which Baldwin wrote was built in 1893 on the site allocated by Capt. A. Fraser to T.A.Denny of Beedingwood, who appointed the ministers, until the chapel was sold to Wesleyan Methodists in 1903-4.²¹

Short noted that the Sussex Weald interior had increased in population by 72% over the period from 1801 to 1851, although in certain central Weald communities such as Crawley, Lower Beeding and Slaugham, the population had more than doubled. As noted at the beginning of the chapter, it was this increase that had so alarmed the clergy. The area around Horsham remained reasonably prosperous during the first half of the 19th century but by the second half the town began to pull in the rural population due to underemployment in agriculture and the impact of the railways, so that Horsham parish population increased by 118% in the 50 years from 1851 to 1901. Lower Beeding population increase, in contrast, was considerably slower at only 12%, and the fact that there was an increase at all was due to the loss of young people looking for work being balanced by an influx of wealthy London professionals and managers settling in family villas with gardens within easy travelling distance of railway stations.²²

In the early 19th century the church had taken on much of the responsibility for educating both the poor and the middle classes. Elleray noted that the Schools Inquiry Commission 1858-61 found nine tenths of elementary schools in England were church schools, and three quarters of the children being educated in Anglican schools with a smaller proportion in catholic and nonconformist schools. Magdalen College, Oxford supported the education of middle class boys, and with the energetic advocacy of the curate of St. Mary de Haura, New Shoreham, Nathaniel Woodward, it made substantial grants for the establishment of Lancing College and two other schools at

²¹ Baldwin, 1985, p. 36.

²² Short, B., *Population Change 1801-1851*, pp. 88-9 and Sheppard, J., *Population Change 1851-1901*, pp.90-1, both in Leslie & Short, 1999, and VCH, II pp. 215-21.

Hurstpierpoint and Ardingly, all with impressive chapels for high church Anglican worship.²³

Horsfield noted in 1835 that Thomas Broadwood of Holmbush had also established a school, built on the roadside near Crawley which was sufficient to educate 80 boys and 46 girls under the direction of the Rev. J.S. Lewin of Ifield, the land having been given by a Col. Clithero. Most schools in the 18th century had been charity schools or independently founded, the church Sunday schools contributing much to the spread of reading and writing. The 19th century did however see some demands for a rate-supported system of secular education such as espoused by Richard Cobden (1804-1865) the radical and Liberal statesman born near Midhurst, Sussex, who railed against parliamentary grants going to the building of schools for the established church, the lack of transparency, and the poor and unequal quality of teaching. The British government did intervene eventually with the Education Act 1870 which brought into being elected school boards, with the power to build and manage schools, an inspectorate for standards and compulsory attendance up to the age of 10. Certificated teachers were not college trained but had often been ex-pupil teachers who studied part-time for their certificate. Voluntary schools declined in the face of competition from Board Schools and then secular universal education became a reality with the 1902 Education Act in which local authorities took on responsibilities for elementary, secondary and technical education.²⁴

Comment on the provision of education in Lower Beeding was made in the meeting of representatives for Horsham sitting on Thursday, November 7th, 1867 for the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture. It was stated that there were two government schools in Lower Beeding

²³ Elleray, 1981, pp. 10-11.

²⁴ Horsfield, 1835, p. 223, and Caffyn, J., *Schools in the 18th Century*, pp. 82-3, in Leslie & Short, 1999. Also William, E.A. (1908) Cobden and Secular Education, *Westminster Review*, January 1908, p. 13, and Hey, D. (ed.) (1996) *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History*, Oxford University Press, pp. 144-149 (hereafter Hey, 1996).

parish, plus one infant school supported by Mrs Dickins. This was Mrs Anne Marie Scrase-Dickins, nee Aldridge, from Coolhurst.²⁵ The 'government schools' were stated to be both under certified masters, were liberally supported by the nearby landowners and took about 200 children. It was too early for these to be Board Schools and so they were probably parliamentary grant aided church schools, and this is confirmed by the later report of 1870. There were also two night schools with an attendance of 50 and it was noted that 'within the last six years much has been done to civilise and educate the people in this wild district'. Three years later the Report of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education, 1870, noted that annual parliamentary grants had been given to two schools in the parish. The first was to the school of the Holy Trinity parish church, with an average attendance of 76 they received £37, whilst in Colgate the school with an average attendance of 54 received £23 5s per annum in 1869.²⁶

b) The Villages of Colgate and Lower Beeding.

Previous historical and geographical studies of Sussex communities such as Ambrose's study of Ringmer and Short's study of Plumpton have used the model of 'open' and 'close' communities as an analytical tool. Dennis Mills began this approach in the 1950s looking at 'dispersed' and 'grouped' types of community near Lincoln. He developed the 'grouped' type into 'estate' and 'freeholder' villages, which he proposed were differentiated by their relationships between population size and density, land ownership and tenure. These relationships, he suggested, were based on the poor law and its administration through parish vestries. Mills' later studies used the language of the mid-19th century Poor Law Commissioners, so that estate villages were known as 'closed', or in the Victorian language 'close', and freeholder villages were called 'open'. Although Jackson points out that there was in reality a continuum between the two,

²⁵ The identity of Mrs Dickins was confirmed by Maj. Mark Scrase-Dickins, who also noted that it was common for the family to be referred to by just the one surname, Dickins.

²⁶ Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture, 1867, First Report (P.P. 1867-8, **XVII**), pp. 81-2, (hereafter P.P. 1867-8, **XVII**) and Davey, R., Schools in the 19th century, pp. 84-5 in Leslie & Short, 1999, and TNA ED17/36 Report of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education, 1870-1.

and additional anomalies where the estate landowner was absent, and where there was a separation between landlord and authority or power.²⁷

Holderness suggested that the concept of open and close parishes was not new to the Victorians, although the terminology of open and close was probably first used in the 1830s. It was then that the problems of poor housing, hygiene, overcrowding and the moral failings of the open parishes became a cause for social concern. Banks wrote that the idea of open and close parishes were first introduced and developed as propaganda campaign for the reform of the settlement laws and thus has been misused when taken as a predictive model for understanding communities at that time. It should also be noted, as Short does, that 'parish' and 'village' were not interchangeable terms. Many villages, hamlets, farms and estate buildings fell within a parish, and decisions on the poor of that parish over quite a large area would have been decided at the parish vestry meetings. The Union Chargeability Act 1865 eventually moved the responsibility for setting the parish poor rate to the larger Unions, thereby loosening the landowners control in the 'close' parishes where power struggles had been played out.²⁸

In reviewing studies of the 'Open-Closed' settlement model, Jackson accepts some lack of flexibility with regard to changes over time and space, and in human attitude and behaviour, plus an overemphasis on land ownership. Short also notes the static nature of the model, and the emphasis on land ownership rather than power. Jackson agreed with Tiller that the model is 'one of the most useful to historians of rural communities'

²⁷ Ambrose, P. (1974) *The Quiet Revolution, Social Change in a Sussex Village 1871-1971*, Sussex University Press, and Short, B. (ed.)(1981) *Scarpfoot Parish: Plumpton 1830-1880*. CCE Occasional Paper No. 16. University of Sussex,(hereafter Short, 1981) and Jackson A.J.H. (2012) The 'Open-Closed' Settlement Model and the Interdisciplinary Formulations of Dennis Mills: Conceptualising Local Rural Change, *Rural History*, Vol. **23.02**, pp. 121-136 (hereafter Jackson, 2012).

²⁸ Holderness, B.A. (1972) 'Open' and 'Close' Parishes in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol. **20.2** pp. 126-139, (hereafter Holderness, 1972) and Banks, S. (1988) Nineteenth Century Scandal or Twentieth Century Model? A New Look at 'Open' and 'Close' Parishes, *The Economic History Review*, Vol. **41.1** pp. 51-73 (hereafter Banks, 1988) and Short, B. (ed.)(1992) *The Evolution of Contrasting Communities within rural England, The English Rural Community*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 19-43 (hereafter Short, 1992).

and that the interdisciplinary thought and method that Mills brought to his subject through the open-close settlement model will continue to be of increasing interest.²⁹ However, in a recent paper Bird explores the 20th century use of the model and finds it inadequate with too many exceptions, particularly, as Banks found, with the relationship to landownership concentration. Bird argues that a more reliable model of comparisons of landownership concentration was a tool derived from economics, the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index. She then suggests that landownership concentrations, with movement of labour and poor law expenditure are not such good predictors of 19th century communities as an examination of the interdependency and communications between neighbouring parishes. Within this current study, Horsham parish, due to its market town and subsequent infrastructure, had a major impact on the surrounding parishes including Lower Beeding and the Forest.³⁰

Both Colgate and Lower Beeding appear to lie towards the closed end of the 'Open-Closed' settlement model due to the patronage and control exercised by the few landowners on the three Anglican churches, the schools, and their rented and tenanted properties. However, the power exercised through the parish vestry could not have been wielded by the landowners here, as in older established villages, given that the Parish of Lower Beeding was created in 1837-8, the parish church of the Holy Trinity consecrated in 1840 but still in the control of Magdalen College, Oxford until 1861, but then the Union Chargeability Act 1865 removed any power to set poor rates.

In other ways the two villages could be regarded as many Wealden villages, towards the open end of the spectrum. There were small brickmaking industries, shops and public houses, a non-conformist chapel, and dispersal of property ownership as some of the estates came up for sale at the end of the 19th century. Other important geographic and economic factors in the development of these two villages were their

²⁹ Jackson, 2012, Short, 1992 and Tiller, K. (1992, 2002) *English Local History, An Introduction*, Gloucs., Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., pp. 171-233.

³⁰ Banks, 1988, and Bird, P. (2014) 'Open' and 'Closed' Villages: A new Methodology for assessing landownership concentration, *The Local Historian*, Vol. **44.1**, pp. 35-50.

close proximity to the open and prosperous market town of Horsham, and access to London and Brighton through the establishment of the railways in 1848. These growing towns and the metropolis of London provided opportunities for work, and the railways provided the means to take up those opportunities. Likewise, in the other direction people were able move out of London to the quiet of Sussex, such as Horsham and the Forest. Thus the proximity of the towns, and particularly London, were an important factor in the development of the villages.³¹

Beckett in his research on *Rethinking the English Village* identified three factors that would impact on whether nucleated villages, hamlets or scattered habitation would develop as a type of settlement. These factors were the economics of farming, social value and the role of the church. For example, farms needed workers to live within walking distance, social value lay within the sharing of skills such as midwifery, dressmaking, or carpentry, and of course churches needed a population in which to pay for their vicar. The two villages studied here, Colgate and Lower Beeding were, however rather different, being new Victorian villages in a rural setting created by small middle class landowners, and open to the impact of expanding towns and the capital city.³²

With regard to Colgate village, the decennial census of 1841 covered the enumeration district 10, north of Hammerpond Road to Holmbush and included Colgate but did not name it as a village. In this enumeration district there were 50 houses accommodating 282 people, including children, and only 48 of these in nine houses had the address of Colgate (see table 6.5). It is difficult to know where these were but it is reasonable to assume they were on the Forest Road, near the turn to the road to Faygate, and near the chapel which would later become St. Saviour.

³¹ Short, 1992, p. 30.

³² Beckett, J. (2012) Rethinking the English village, *The Local Historian* Vol. 42 No. 2, pp. 301-311.

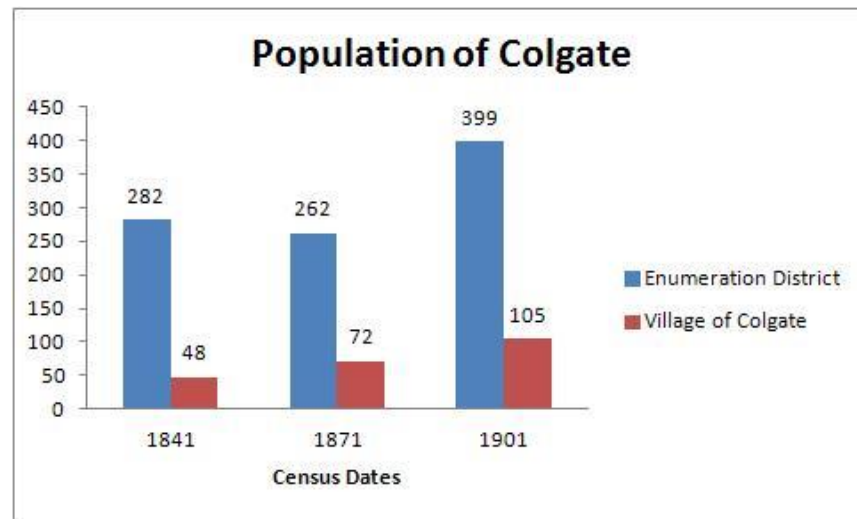


Figure 6.5: Comparison bar chart of Enumeration District population and author's figures for the approximate village population of Colgate.

On the 1876 OS map there were only 11 houses marked, apart from the vicarage, church and school (see figure 6.6). Of the nine households in 1841 the average age of the head of household was 33, of the occupations of the men, seven were agricultural labourers, two were sawyers and one was a farmer. All were from Sussex apart from the two sawyers, Richard and Henry Chapman who were possibly brothers aged 29 and 26 respectively, and they came with their wives and families from outside Sussex. In the 1841 census the county of birth outside Sussex was not noted, so it is not possible to know where they came from. Four families had four children, one had six, and those parents with fewer were in their early twenties, and there was one couple in their 50s with either no children, or at least no children living with them.³³

³³ HO 107/1095/11 Horsham North/10 Census 1841

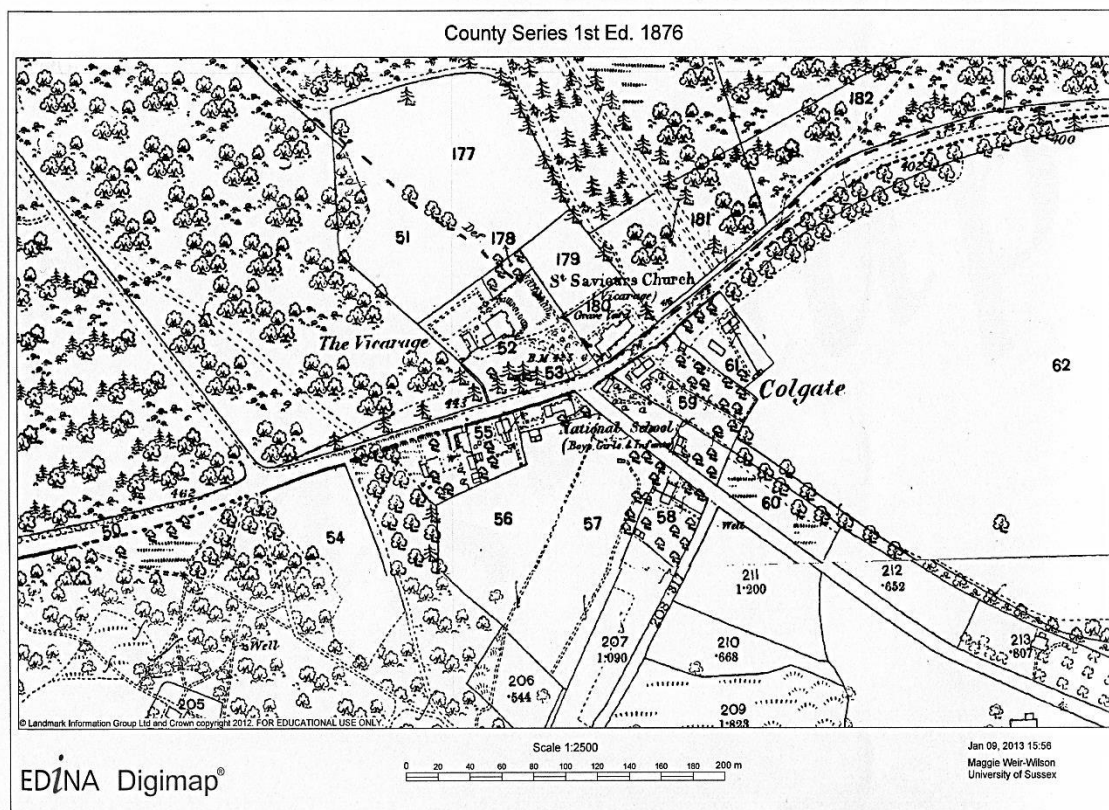


Figure 6.6: Colgate village showing increase of houses to approximately 11. OS County Series 1:2500, 1st Edition, 1876, reproduced with permission of Edina Historic Digimap.

The condition of these 'villagers' is illuminated by a newspaper report of July 1844, three years after the census, which told of a serious food poisoning occurrence. The report tells that a diseased carcass of a cow that had contracted murrain was sold for 10s to a poor man from Colgate, Mr Chapman, to feed his pigs and chickens.³⁴ It seems that the Chapman family ate some of the meat and fed it to the chickens and pigs, the chickens died and the pig either died or was killed and they ate that as well. It was reported that after a short time symptoms of an 'alarming nature' appeared and the medical officer from the Union was sent for. He found that the family were living in a hut 'which scarcely deserved the name of a house' and by consulting the neighbours discovered that the family had been eating putrid meat for some time. The medical officer, Mr Lovegrove was appalled by the conditions they were living in, the 'effluvia' arising from the contents of the house were overwhelming as the pigs, chickens and

³⁴ Murrain was a general non-specific label for an infectious disease in cattle and sheep such as foot and mouth or anthrax.

family had been living in the same room. He moved them into a tent but by this time Chapman and two of his children were sinking fast and died, a third child of about seven was not expected to survive. Reference to the 1841 census would indicate that the Mr Chapman referred to was Richard Chapman, the sawyer from outside of Sussex, who on the 1841 census had a wife, Elizabeth and four children, Caroline aged seven, Edward aged five, William aged three and James aged three months. His wife was not mentioned in the newspaper report and it may be that she succumbed earlier to the poor food and conditions. The reporter was further astonished by the fact that the family were quickly buried with no notice sent to the coroner, only the medical officer's report given to Horsham Union. The report does indicate the dire living conditions of some of the residents of the Forest, the poor labourers who had no ties to the area and no security of work.³⁵

Poverty in Colgate had been alluded to by both Friswell and Baldwin in their reports of the habits of Helena Bennett, as discussed in Chapter 5, who was said to be warmly remembered as being kind and generous by the ordinary people of Colgate. Friswell wrote that she was good to the impoverished and had bread brought from Horsham for distribution to the poor of Colgate. In 1843, comment was made by an unnamed agriculturist in West Sussex reporting to the Special Assistant of Poor Law Commissioners whilst recommending the establishment of local allotments. The person wrote that an allotment would improve the wife's cookery and the use of vegetables 'which she had well-nigh lost from having so many years eaten little but bread and butter and cheese from the village shop'. This indicates a poor and unvaried diet of ordinary labourers and their families, and the importance of bread as a main component.³⁶

³⁵ *The Morning Post*, Tues 2 July 1844, Issue 22923.

³⁶ Baldwin, 1985, p. 20, and Friswell, N.C. (2000) *The Indian Princess: Helena Bennett, Asian Affairs*, **31:3**, pp. 259-302, and Reports of the Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture (P.P. 1843, **XII**), p. 143.

Twenty five years later another report gave an insight into the conditions of housing in Lower Beeding. *The First Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture 1867-8* noted that whilst the conditions of cottages in the south of Lower Beeding parish were fair and not crowded, however those in the north, which would have included Colgate, the condition was said to be bad and often too crowded. It was noted in the report that a number of turf huts had been put up early in the 19th century and about a dozen were still remaining and occupied by Irish families, although there is little evidence for this in the 1841 or 1871 census for Colgate. However, it is very possible that they were not at home at the time of the census, or that they were itinerant and moving on, so one cannot assume they were not there.³⁷

The 1871 census, together with the sales particulars for parts of the St. Leonard's Forest estate, first offered for sale in 1878 and subsequently in 1881, give some indication of the growth of Colgate in the 30 years since the census in 1841 and a change in the ownership of land. Colgate village as a settlement at this time is difficult to define, but for this study it is determined to be those houses near the church, school and public house, on land owned by the Aldridges to the south west and Clifton Brown to the north east. An approximation of the extent of the village for this study will be taken as a kilometre radius from the centre, which is St. Saviour's church, and excluding the mansions of Holmbush and New Lodge and their immediate estate cottages apart from Blue Gate Lodge and Holmbush Tower which fall within the kilometre. Ivy Cottage on the west is excluded but New Barn farm immediately south of Colgate Hill is included and to the south east Colgate Lodge is included. Black Hill farm to the east was only established after 1841 and does not appear in the census until 1901 (see figure 6.7).³⁸

³⁷ P.P. 1867-8, **XVII**, p. 82.

³⁸ RG10/1099 Horsham North/13 Census 1871 and Horsham Museum (HM) MSS SP 203, SP 218.

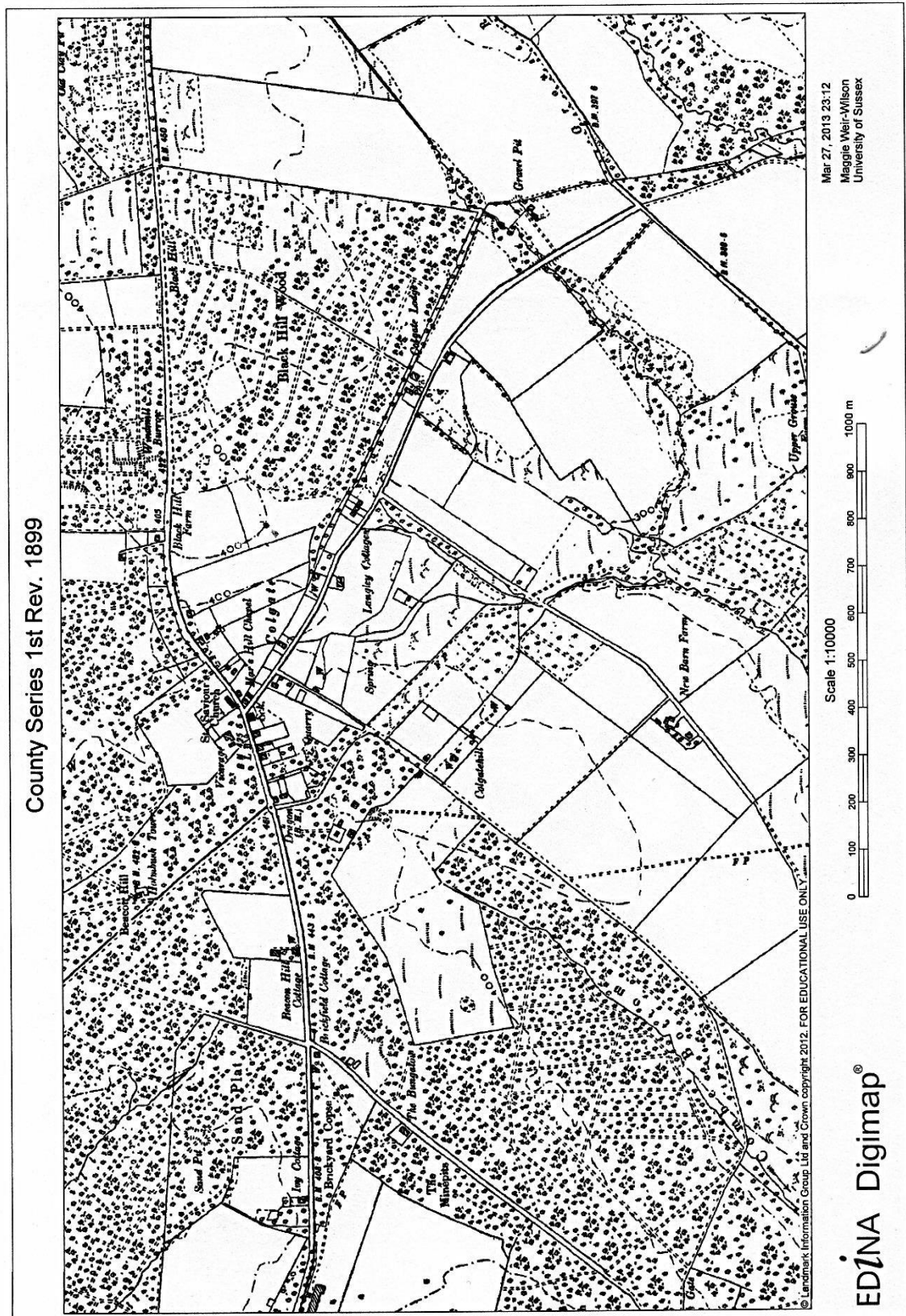


Figure 6.7: Colgate village, showing named properties such as Black Hill Farm, Beacon Hill Cottage and the appearance of Mars Hill Chapel. OS County Series, 1:10560, 1st Revision, 1899, reproduced with permission of Edina Historic Digimap.

The 1871 census, enumeration district 13, surprisingly shows a decrease in the 30 years from 1841 in the enumeration district from 50 houses and 282 people to 48 houses and 262 people, but an increase in Colgate village from nine houses to 13 and from 48 people to 72, half of whom were children. It is noticeable that there was much more variety in the village profile, from occupations, and places of birth to female occupations. However, perhaps the most important developments in the building of the community were the establishment by 1871 of the church and vicarage, a school, grocery shop and a beer shop.

Of the 13 households in 1871 the average age of the head of the household was 46, indicating that the community had aged due to the older shopkeepers and farmers and fewer agricultural labourers. There were two farmers, James Lee, 36, at Coombe Land farming 24 acres with his wife Emily and four children, and James Sheathen [sic] of Colgate Lodge, 40, farming 241 acres with his wife Susanna and one young son. In the village there were 11 labourers in total, although not specified as agricultural labourers as in the 1841 census, for example, George Payne, 35 was listed as a woodsman labourer. George Agate, 56, remained as an agricultural labourer and his wife Sarah and their children are the only family that are recognisable in the 1871 census from the 1841 census. Their two older sons, James, 21 and William 19 were labouring and the three other children were in the home, the middle one listed as scholar. Seven years later in the 1878 Aldridge sales details George Agate was recorded as a yearly tenant of a cottage, garden, woodhouse and land at Barnsnap totalled three acres, mostly pasture and orchard lying to the south of Colgate village, and let to him as a yearly tenant for £3 a year. By the 1901 census the family was back in the village at Langley cottages and the head of household, 59 year old John Agate born in Colgate is labouring on a farm.

James Budgeon, 66, another labourer had married Caroline Colin, 48, the personal maid to Helena Bennett, and by 1871 they had twin boys, James and Henry, both 16 years old and both labourers, and two younger children. They had one of two cottages

with three acres, all pasture apart from the garden, and there was a yearly tenancy for the two properties of £10 a year. There was one gardener in the village, Henry Funnell, 42, with his wife and six children, their eldest son, Benjamin, was an 18 year old labourer. Although it is difficult to place where they lived, in or near the village, there was a charcoal burner, William Hughes, 29 with his wife and three lodgers. One of the lodgers, Thomas Harlow, 45 years old and married, also gave charcoal burning as his business. The other two younger lodgers and Hughes' wife had the occupation of 'splitter' with 'lath' also connected with charcoal burning. To the west of the village was Colgate brickyard, five acres including cottage, garden, brickfield and brick kiln and yard. Although in hand in 1878 the 1871 census shows a brick maker, Matthew Dearing, 32, living and working there, with his wife and three children.

The house, grocer's shop, offices and gardens were let on leases of 99 years from 1869 and 1874 to James Langley, 53, with his wife, two sons and the lodger, Solomon Waldrew was employed as a gamekeeper. Further along Forest Road to the west was the Dragon beer shop with house, offices and gardens occupied in 1871 by Reuben Ashby, 66, his wife, two sons and three daughters. The eldest son, also Reuben, was a 21 year old labourer and the eldest daughter an employed housekeeper, but the next daughter of 20 was noted as 'imbecile' or as having mental health problems and her younger sister of 17 was noted as her helper. By 1878 it appears the Ashbys had moved on and the beer shop was let on a 44 year lease to H. Mitchell for £4 a year. The cottage attached was let to Harriet Davy for the term of her life at a nominal rent of 1s per annum. The 1871 census, recorded seven years earlier, had a Mary Ann Davey, 65, a widow kept by the Parish and it seems likely that this was the same person, or a relative.³⁹

Finally, according to the 1871 census, there is the schoolmaster, Charles Reynolds, 31 and his wife Elizabeth, 31, their three children and at the time of the census a visiting cousin Alice Hammond, 17, from Chichester near Reynold's birthplace. The census

³⁹ HM MS SP203.

notes that Elizabeth Reynolds was also a teacher, and Baldwin wrote that before marriage she was Elizabeth Venus, daughter of George Venus, bailiff to the Coolhurst estate, and had been married in St. John's church with a Scrase-Dickins as witness. When George Venus died in 1877 the family moved to take up his now vacant position at Coolhurst. However, it was said that Reynolds had built four cottages in Colgate and that he sold these to finance an unsuccessful trip to prospect for gold in the Klondike. In 1878 two houses with gardens in the village which were owned by the Aldridge estate were let on a 99 year lease to Reynolds so he may well have bought these and others that were up for sale twenty years before the gold rush in the United States. Reynolds was clearly a multi-talented and interesting man, Baldwin quotes his great grandson, Peter Reynolds, as saying that he was also a good gardener and developed a new potato variety which he called 'The Teacher'.⁴⁰

Although Colgate village was becoming older, larger and more varied in its profile, with some female occupations noted, there were still not many incomers from outside of Sussex. Birth places for adults showed only one from Dorset, two from Surrey and the remainder from Sussex. Surprisingly only one family, the Agates appear to have remained in Colgate for 30 years, so there is considerable movement of families to and from Colgate, perhaps due to the newness of the village and the close proximity of Horsham, the market town.

Moving on to consider the development of Colgate village by the 1901 census, again with a period of 30 years since the 1871 census, it can be seen that the numbers of houses and households in the enumeration district 14 had grown considerably from 48 houses and 262 people to 201 houses and 399 people. In Colgate village the growth was from 11 to 35 houses and from 72 to 105 people, a much greater growth than from 1841 to 1871. Somewhat surprisingly the age of the head of household had again increased to an average age of 50 years, and this is not necessarily due to older people

⁴⁰ Baldwin, 1985, p.35 and RG10/1099 Horsham North/13 Census 1871 and Horsham Museum MSS SP 203 and SP 218.

in trade or professions but older workers as well. For example, there was a 72 years old charcoal burner, Thomas Harper, a 60 year old gardener, Richard Gates and 76 year old farmer, Caroline Budgeon, who clearly would have had help from her son Henry, a 46 year old agricultural labourer living with her. Older people of note as head of households and part of the burgeoning middle classes were Jean Lebeque, a French wine merchant, 58, living at Colgate Lodge with his wife and a housemaid of 21, and Thomas Mansbridge, 55, with his wife, 57, both from Hampshire and living on their own means at Beacon Hill Cottage. Finally there was James Langley, 66, with his wife Ruth at the Mars Chapel, stated to be living on his own means. By this time the chapel must have ceased to be used for worship and converted to a private house. Later, the Land Valuation Survey of 1910-15 clarified that the chapel was used as 'Colgate Recreation Rooms', still owned by the Langleys but they had moved away to New Street in Horsham.⁴¹

What strikes one about this older village population is that there are not as many children as one would anticipate in such a village which has an elementary school with school teachers in the centre of the village. There are only 10 households out of the 35 who have children, and one of them, The Vicarage, has a working 15 year old maid, Florence Ingram from London, and another 17 year old, Emily Grimshaw from nearby Southwater, which illustrates the continuing employment of very young domestic servants away from their homes. The widow and charwoman, Elizabeth Reed had a 15 year old son noted to have the occupation of 'houseboy' again in domestic service but able to live at home.

Out of a total population in Colgate village alone of about 105 only 28 of these were children below the age of 18. Given that the elementary or primary education at that time took children from five to 14, there would only be a possible 15 eligible to attend the school built for 100 places. The catchment area would have been larger than just the village and would have included Holmbush, Bewbush, and south of the Forest but

⁴¹ RG13/949 Horsham North/14 Census 1901 and TNA Field Book IR58/94090.

not to Lower Beeding village which had its own school. Kelly's Directory of 1899 stated that attendance at the school was an average of 65, which was well below capacity.⁴²

Discounting the young house maids at the Vicarage who had been born in London and nearby Southwater, of the nine households with children, most had one or two children, the Ashby family had three small sons, the Langley family had two sons and two daughters. There were two larger families; the Pink family had five young children under eight. However, the largest family was that of the Nichols at Blue Gate Lodge on the Holmbush estate with eight children, six daughters and two sons aged from 14 to eight months. Reay explored fertility in English villages and wrote that family sizes reduced over the 19th century, particularly after 1835, and that there was a shift from natural fertility to family limitation after the 1880s following changes in attitude to childbearing.⁴³

It is clear with what has been noted about Colgate and the 1901 census so far, that the village had grown and become further varied with regard to occupation and place of birth. Considering the variety in occupation it appears that four were in trade (wine merchant, coal merchant, grocer and Inn Keeper) two were professional (teacher and clergy) 16 were still in agriculture, six in service and three were living on their own means plus another three dependant on family members for support. One head of household of the Nichols family was absent on census day and not noted although since the family were living on the Holmbush estate it is likely he was working in service, or in agriculture on the estate(see table 6.1).

⁴²Kelly's Directory of Sussex, 1899, accessible through: www.historicaldirectories.org

⁴³ Reay, B. (1994) Before the transition: fertility in English villages, 1800-1880. *Continuity and Change*, Vol. 9, Issue 1, pp. 91-120.

Table 6.1: Statistics from Census returns of village of Colgate showing changing pattern of employment through head of household occupations for 1841, 1871 and 1901.

Colgate Village, Occupations of Head of Household

Occupation	1841	1871	1901
Agric. Labourer	7	-	7
Brick maker	-	1	-
Carter	-	-	1
Charcoal Burner	-	1	1
Charwoman	-	-	1
Clergy	-	-	1
Coachman	-	-	1
Coal Merchant	-	-	1
Farmer	1	2	5
Game Keeper	-	-	1
Gardener	-	1	3
Grocer	-	1	1
Inn Keeper	-	1	1
Labourer	-	3	1
Own Means	-	-	3
Parish Relief	-	1	-
Press Worker	-	-	1
Sawyer	2	-	-
School master	-	1	1
Shepherd	-	-	1
Wine Merchant	-	-	1
Woodman	-	-	1

Looking at the places of birth it can be seen that families are being attracted in from nearby southern counties such as Surrey, Kent, Hampshire, Devon and Buckinghamshire, as well as the capital, London. From further afield came Jean Lebeque from France, wine merchant, with his wife Catherine from Reigate in Surrey and a very local housemaid, 21 year old Catherine Ashby from Colgate. The Ashby family were Inn Keepers in the 1871 census and Catherine may have been a later daughter or even granddaughter. William Ashby was the youngest son of Reuben Ashby the Inn Keeper in 1871 and the 1901 census found him running the public house with his wife Emily and three small sons, and living with them was his sister-in-law, a 25 year old housemaid. From the same family was George Ashby, 25 year old gamekeeper from Colgate, who was living with his wife Emily from Kent.

Other families had been recorded in the 1871 census and still appeared 30 years later on the 1901 census. Caroline Budgeon was still living at Colgate but as a widow with her 48 year old son Henry as small farmers. Henry Funnell who had been a gardener with wife and four children in 1871 was now at 77 a widower living with two adult sons, Frank, 39 a brick maker and Charles, 34 a gardener like his father. Sophie Payne, now a widow at 59, was living with her adult son George a carter, she had clearly married George Payne with whom she was living in 1871 as Sophie King with her two King children, Fred and George. Only one family record stretched back to 1841 and that was the Agate family. In 1901 John Agate and his wife Elizabeth, both 59, lived in one of the Langley cottages with a lodger, Percy Smith, 23. The Agates had been farm labourers in 1841 and remained so in 1901.

Of the 35 households only five were established Colgate families over the previous 30 years which again indicates migration in and out of the village. Clearly this is only a snapshot of the village within this study's defined boundaries and it may be that people moved within the parish but Horsham town would have been a draw to the

young for employment, as would Brighton and London due to the higher wages. Kitch wrote that in contrast to an idealised impression of static unchanging English villages, there always were both long-term movement and seasonal movement, even amongst freehold and tenant farmers. It was stability over several generations, such as with the Aldridges of St. Leonard's Forest, that was unusual. Most people moved once in their lives, either for work or marriage, but this tended to be short distances. In Kitch's research he found that most moves were within 10 miles, or a day's walk, some moving many times but not much further than the neighbouring village, parish or town. He noted that geography did have an impact on migration and cited the Sussex Weald as notoriously hard to get around, particularly before the mid-19th century.⁴⁴

Details from the Field Books of the Land Valuation Survey of 1910-15 confirmed that much property passed from the Aldridges to the Saillards of Buchan Hill. For example, with reference to the maps of the village produced for the land valuation, (see figure 6.8) numbers 184, 185, 149, 177, 180, 67 and 68 which included the Public House and shop all have Saillard as the freeholder, in addition he owned Beacon Hill Cottage to the west of the village and Colgate Lodge to the south east. Clifton Brown from Holmbush continued to own property on the east of the village such as 264, 265, 266, 267, 268 and 269. However, individual property owners were beginning to appear, for example, Mrs A.M.E. Cot from Chapel Street, Liverpool, who owned the cottages 189 and 190. The Vicarage, shown on the map as 66 had an owner and occupier of W. Harsfall, who had fruit trees, tennis courts and a coach house in the grounds. Interestingly plot 428 in the centre of the village next to the school was cited as allotments, until a house was built on part of the land in 1909. The owner was N.S. Langley of 121 New Street Horsham, who rented it out to various people. The Langley family, both Mrs Langley at 111 New Street and N.S. Langley owned the leasehold of a number of cottages such as 215 and 216 which they subsequently rented out.

⁴⁴ Kitch, M. (1992) Population movement and migration in pre-industrial rural England, Short, B. (ed.), *The English Rural Community*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 62-84.

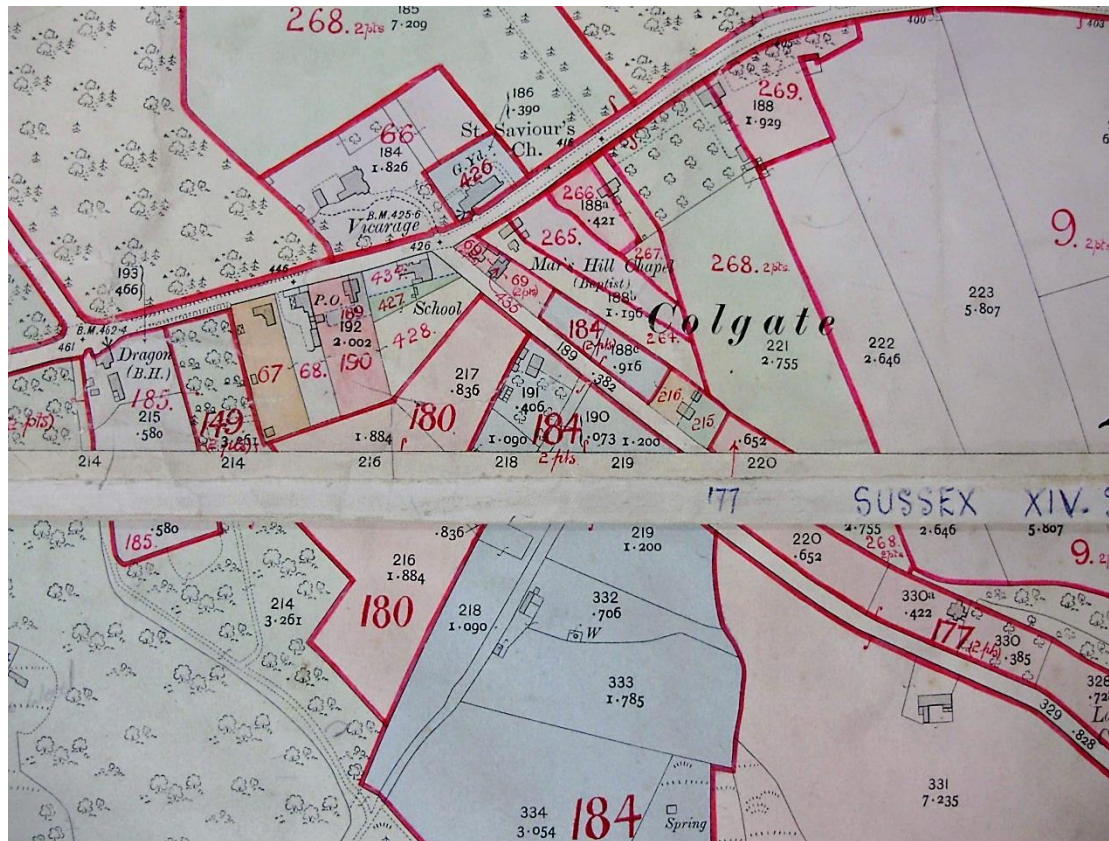


Figure 6.8: The 1910-15 Land Valuation Survey maps of Colgate village TNA IR124/9/113 and IR124/9/117.

Lower Beeding village had a similar provenance to that of Colgate in that a large part of it was owned by the Aldridge estate so that properties and land became available for purchase in 1878 and again in 1881, thus giving more opportunities for the middle classes to settle in the area. *The First Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture 1867-8* had noted that the south of the parish was more populous and the houses in better condition than the north. This is confirmed in the figures for the enumeration districts that dealt with Lower Beeding and Crabtree. For example, in the 1841 census enumeration district 9 there were 86 inhabited houses and 232 people, four of whom were living in a tent. In the 1871 enumeration district 11 these figures had grown to 124 houses and 612 people, and by 1901 enumeration district 16 showed 148 houses and 670 people. The strongest growth in this small area was from 1841 to 1871 when the population

increased by 164%, and that was before the sale of the Aldridge estate (see figure 6.9).⁴⁵

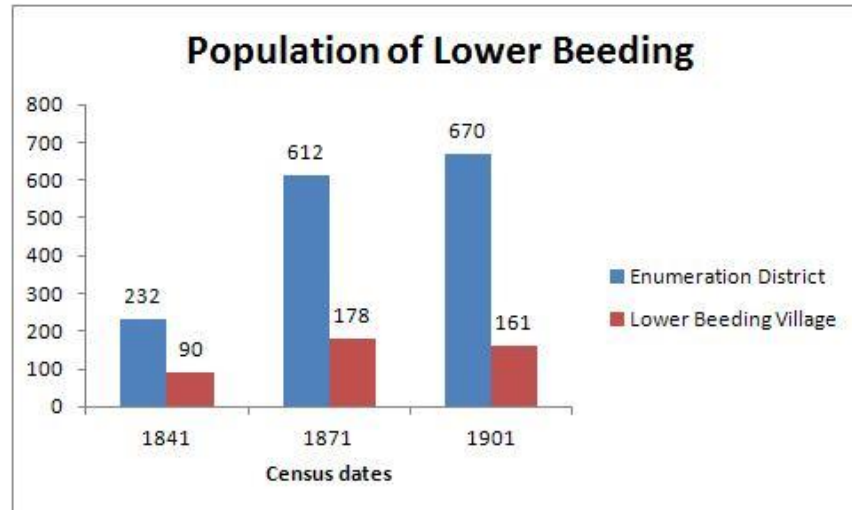


Figure 6.9: Comparison bar chart of Enumeration District population and author's figures for the approximate village population of Lower Beeding.

It should be noted that in comparing enumeration districts over time the geographic areas are not necessarily consistent. Enumeration districts had originally been set up in 1841 as sub-divisions of the Registrars sub-districts for births, marriages and deaths. They were given numbers within the Registrars district and were intended to be meaningful areas such as a village, or parish, or sensible divisions of such. They also had to be of a standard size of about 200 houses in a town, and in rural parts no more than 15 miles in area but containing less than 200 houses. However, with 19th century changes in population and administrative areas, enumeration districts could be split or amalgamated to keep them a reasonable size. Detached parts of parishes, such as at Lower Beeding, caused anomalies that cannot easily be tracked, in fact Higgs wrote that it was difficult to know the extent by which enumeration districts changed over time as they varied not only according to changes in population, boundary complexities, but also the interpretation and conscientiousness of the local officials.

⁴⁵ HO 107/1095/11 Horsham North/9 Census 1841 and RG10/1058 Horsham North/11 Census 1871 and RG13/949 Horsham North/16 Census 1901, and P.P. 1867-8, **XVII**, p. 82.

The numbering system established in 1841 also went through changes and Higgs thought it full of local idiosyncrasies, which should all be borne in mind when comparing population (see tables 6.5 and 6.9).⁴⁶

It is clear from the 1841 census that the village of Lower Beeding was not a defined settlement as it was not named as an address on the census, however there was a 'St. Leonard's village' which appeared to be Crabtree, a cluster of houses to the south of Leonardslee on Mill Lane and the Horsham-to-Cowfold road. Crabtree looked to have more houses at this time with an old Inn and later a post office. It is therefore perhaps surprising that the parish church of Holy Trinity was built in Lower Beeding in the 1840s rather than at Crabtree, however this was probably due to that fact that Robert Aldridge donated the land for the church, 20 acres being a considerable gift. It is difficult to analyse the community at Lower Beeding in 1841 due to the lack of clarity of the addresses, however one can pick out Plummers Plain and Sandygate either side of the Plough Inn which could be considered to be Lower Beeding village. It is assumed that Cross Ways is otherwise known as Ashfold Crossways and therefore further east than the development of the actual village.

Of the 10 houses noted as Plummers Plain, there were three farmers and one brick maker listed as head of households, four agricultural labourers and two ordinary labourers. The three houses on Sandygate contained as head of household one agricultural labourer, one labourer, and one 35 year old cordwainer, or shoemaker, named as William Sherlock living with his wife, four children and two labourers, one in his 80s and the other in his 60s who may well have been assisting with the shoemaking business. The Plough Inn was being run by 40 year old Thomas Barnes, his wife, their seven young children of whom the eldest boy, at 14, was an agricultural labourer. Also at the Inn were Barnes' 70 year old father, and three lodgers, a 60 year old agricultural labourer and a 60 year old labourer, and rather unusually a 14 year old girl, Frances Stoner, noted as an agricultural labourer. There were moral concerns over girls

⁴⁶ Higgs, 2005, pp. 37-42.

working in the fields and this is emphasised by *The First Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture 1867-8* as the meeting for Lower Beeding wrote that it would like to see the employment of girls of between 13 and 18 prohibited from working on the land unless under the supervision of their mothers or natural guardians. It is worth noting, as Howkins does, that the employment of women in agriculture was underestimated by successive censuses and farmers' wives were often discounted as workers. As with Colgate at this date there was a majority of agricultural labourers, and also like Colgate there were brick makers employed by the brick yard and kiln opposite the church. All inhabitants of Lower Beeding were given as coming from Sussex apart from the Innkeeper and his father, one of the farmers' wives and the 60 year old labourer living in the cordwainer's house. In the 1841 census the actual county of birth was not noted, just whether or not they were born in the same county, Sussex.⁴⁷

By the 1871 census the boundaries of the actual village of Lower Beeding are no clearer, but for this study one can continue to look at Sandygate Lane to the west as far as Church Farm and to the east on Plummers Plain as far as Plummers Plain Farm and then south towards Leechpool cottages and Lodge Hill, not including Leonardslee, but to the east to include the national school, all approximately within one kilometre of Holy Trinity church (see figures 6.10 and 6.11). It is possible to identify 36 households in this area and of these the head of household average age was 46 with a total of 81 school aged children. A number of young children were working, there were three female domestic servants aged 17, 16 and 15, one 15 year old barmaid, and of the boys, the youngest was George Vials an 11 year old under-gardener, and still very young were 13 and 14 year old farm labourers and a 15 year old brick maker. Apart from the school that the 11 and 13 year olds were missing, it does highlight the very long working life of a labourer, older labourers in the village being 75 year old agricultural labourer, William Wheeler, and 76 year old William Wales.

⁴⁷ P.P. 1867-8, **XVII**, p. 82 and Howkins, A. (2003) *The Death of Rural England*, London, Routledge, pp. 8, 19, (hereafter Howkins, 2003).

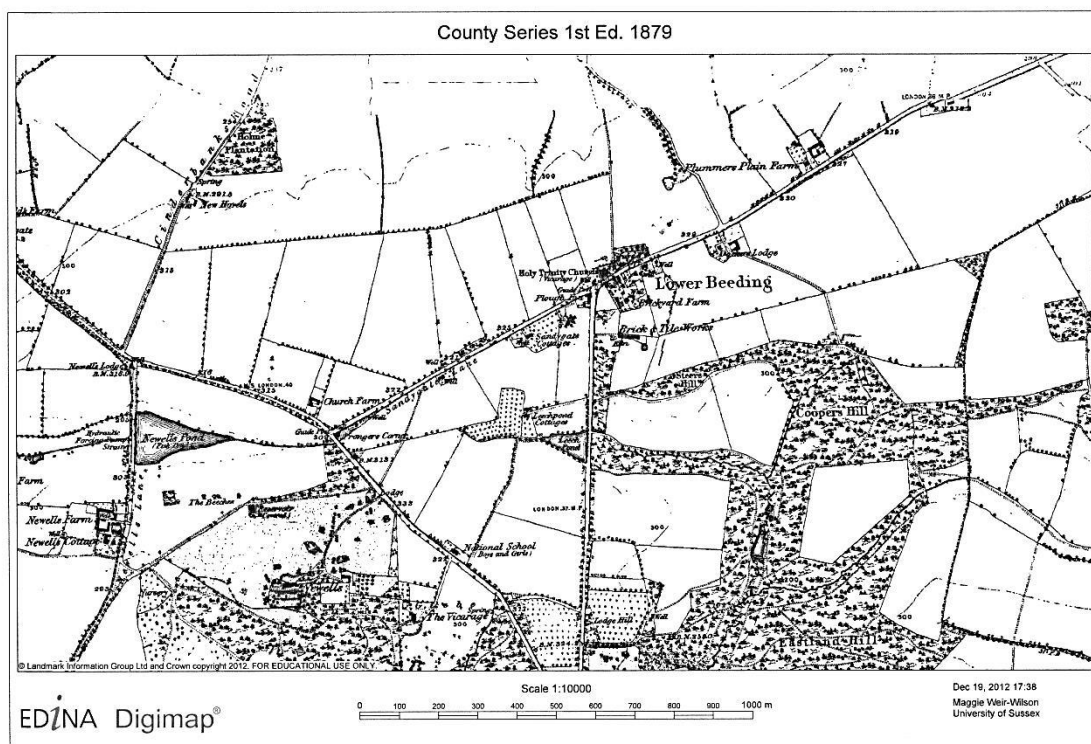


Figure 6.10: Lower Beeding, OS County Series 1:10560, 1st Edition, 1879, reproduced with permission of Edina Historic Digimap.

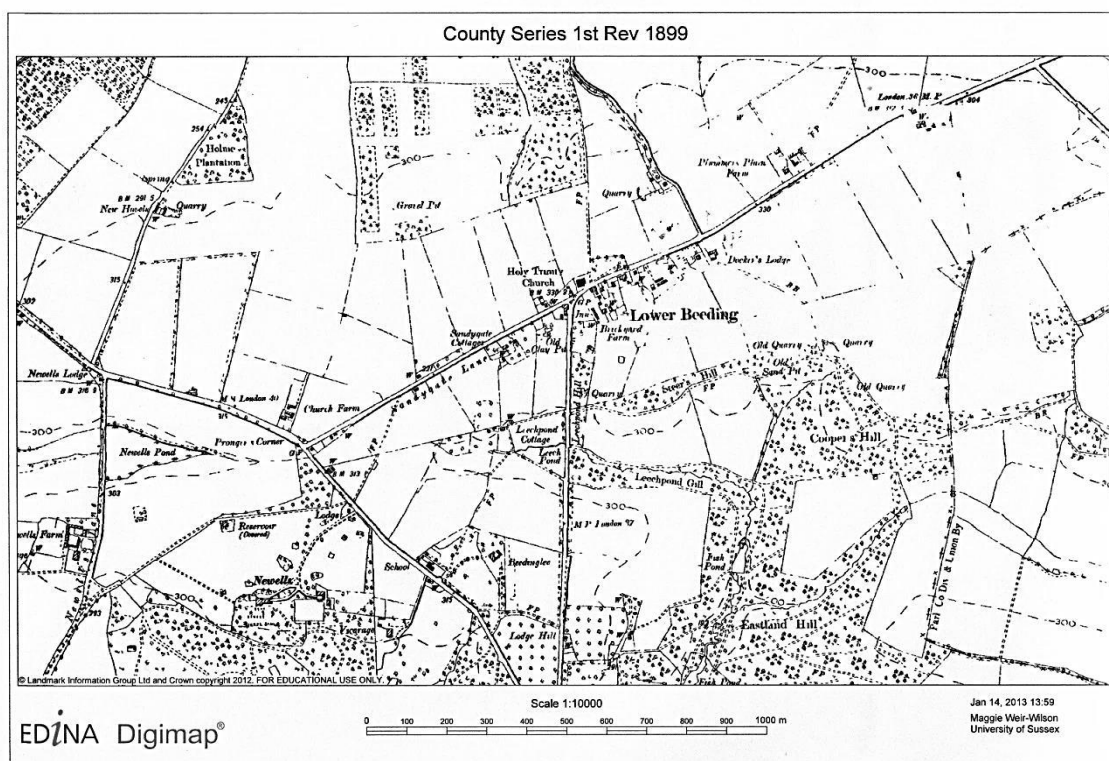


Figure 6.11: Lower Beeding showing increase in cottages on Sandygate Lane and the new mansion of Beedinglee. OS County Series 1:10560, 1st Revision, 1899, reproduced with permission of Edina Historic Digimap.

The profile of occupations of the 36 heads of household in Lower Beeding in 1871 were seven in trade which included carpenters and the cordwainer, two professionals, the vicar and schoolmaster, 19 agricultural workers which included ordinary labourers and carters,⁴⁸ and seven in service, there were none living on their own means although the head of household of the 'new mansion' was absent for the census (see table 6.2). A number of households were living as extended families with elderly fathers or mothers, a niece, or next door to siblings. Two households were coping with the care of adults recorded as 'lunatic from birth'. For example, James Fiest, 58 year old labourer, was living near to his adult son of the same name, and with his wife, 18 year old son and 16 year old daughter and his 56 year old brother, William, noted as 'lunatic from birth'. Next door to them was 77 year old widow Ann Standing, with her 45 year old daughter, Harriet, also noted as 'lunatic from birth'. It was probable that these neighbours were able to assist each other in the daily care of their relatives. Higgs notes that the category of 'lunatic from birth' was very loose and quotes from the 1881 census report that the term 'lunatic' was vague and would include 'some persons suffering from congenital idiocy, and many more suffering from dementia', however it seems as this mental incapacity was 'from birth' it was likely not to be dementia.⁴⁹

The first sale of the Aldridge estate in eight lots in 1878 produced few sales and the estate was offered again in 1881, this time in 56 lots. One can see from Lots 11 and 12 that a large part of Lower Beeding village had been owned by the Aldridge estate although leased in large part to W.E. Hubbard, jnr. (see figures 6.12 and 6.13). The later OS 1899 map (see figure 6.11) shows some filling in of cottages between Dockers Lodge and the older ones opposite the church. However, the 1901 census, enumeration district 16 covering Lower Beeding and Crabtree shows a slower growth from 1871 to 1901 from 124 house and 612 people to 148 houses and 670 people, a population increase of barely 10%.

⁴⁸ Higgs, 2005, pp. 159-163. Given the rural position of the village of Lower Beeding the author has included Carters and Labourers in the Agricultural group of occupations.

⁴⁹ Higgs, 2005, pp. 92-3.

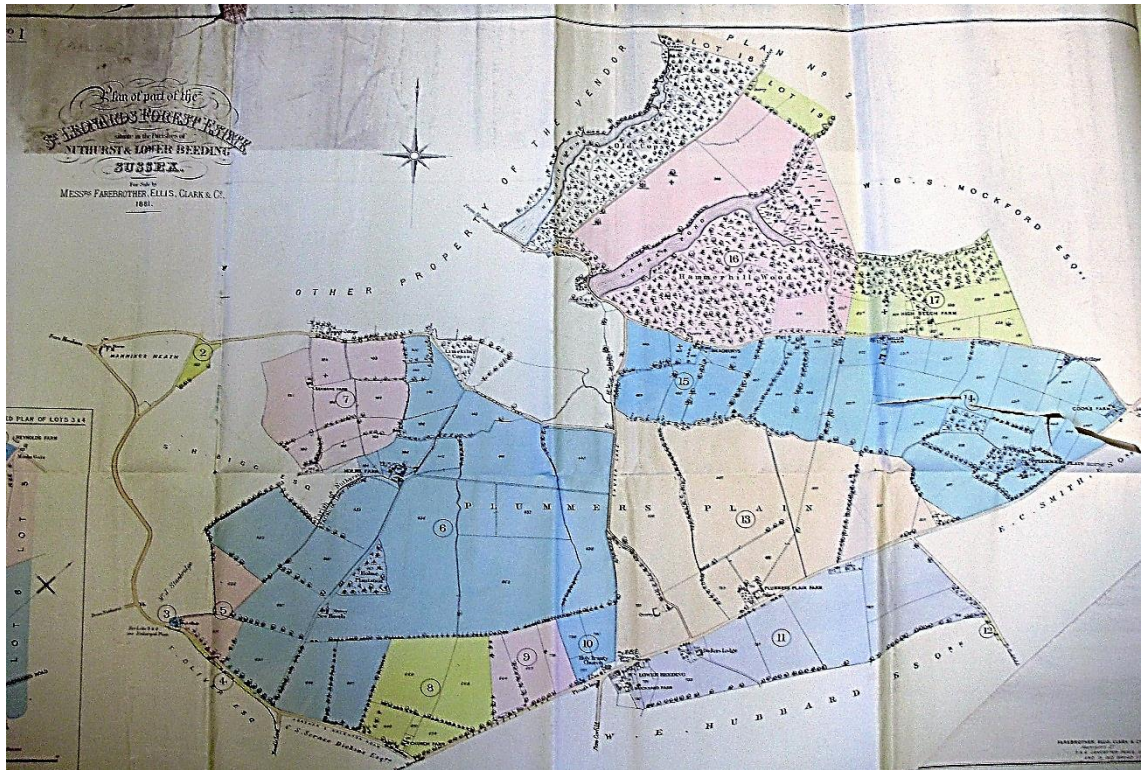


Figure 6.12: Map attached to sales particulars SP 218, sale of St. Leonard's Estate July 1881, showing southern portion Lots 10,11,12 and 13.

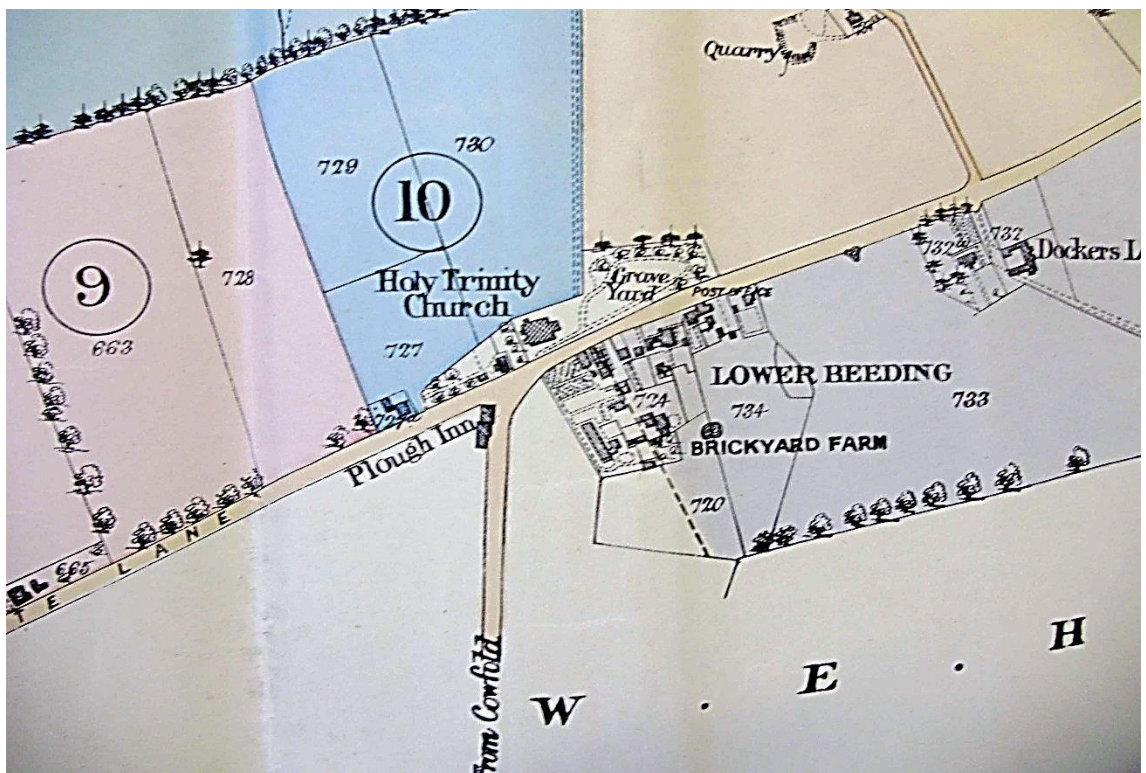


Figure 6.13: Detail of Lower Beeding village on map attached to sales particulars SP 218, sale of St. Leonard's Estate July 1881.

Looking at the 1901 census in the same kilometre area from the church, one can count 37 households, and one empty property on Sandygate Lane. This is virtually the same number as in 1871 and may reflect the difficulties of identifying properties from the census, even with reference to historic maps, rather than a lack of increase in housing.

The pattern of occupations had shifted over the previous 30 years from the majority being in agriculture to an almost similar number now in service to the large houses, such as a porter, butler, maids, coachman, gamekeeper and gardeners (see table 6.2). Not surprisingly, with so many now in service, places of birth amounted to 14 different counties from as far away as Yorkshire and Devon, although the majority came from Sussex and the nearer counties of Surrey, Kent Hampshire and parts of London. The population in the village had aged slightly from 1871 as the average age of the head of household was now 50 years of age. This clearly had an impact on the number of children of school age, between 5 and 14 years of age and these amounted to 47 from only 16 of the households, with 21 young children coming from four families. Again, one is struck by the age of some of the labourers, 81 year old Spencer Palmer was a general farm labourer, and 75 year old George Baines was a gardener's labourer and Alexander Tyrall, a 70 year old labourer. Although evidence from a study of Plumpton, Sussex suggests working into old age was not uncommon, it was not relieved until a state pension was introduced from January 1909 for those over 70 by the reforming Liberal Government.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Short, 1981, p. 26, and Hey, 1996, p. 331.

Table 6.2: Statistics from Census returns of village of Lower Beeding showing changing pattern of employment through head of household occupations for 1841, 1871 and 1901.

Lower Beeding, Occupations of Head of Household

Occupation	1841	1871	1901
Agric. Labourer	5	7	5
Bailiff	-	1	-
Baker	-	-	2
Brick maker	1	1	-
Butler	-	-	1
Carrier	-	-	2
Carter	-	1	1
Clergy	-	1	1
Coachman	-	1	2
Cordwainer	1	1	-
Farmer	3	2	3
Game Keeper	-	1	1
Gardener	-	2	6
Grocer/shopkeeper	-	1	1
Groom	-	1	-
Housekeeper/porter	-	1	1
Inn Keeper	1	1	1
Labourer	3	8	2
Own Means	-	-	1
Painter	-	-	1
Parish Relief	-	-	1
Sawyer/Carpenter	-	3	1
School master	-	1	1
Shepherd	-	-	1
Warehouseman	-	-	1

One of the mansions within the kilometre mile of Lower Beeding, Beedinglee, was built for Louisa Hubbard in 1883 by her brother W.E. Hubbard, Jnr., on land owned by the family. On the 1901 census day it appeared that the mansion was missing the head of household. In 1899 Louisa Hubbard had been partially paralysed by a stroke while on holiday in the Tyrol, Austria, and so there she stayed until her death in 1906.

Meanwhile, in Beedinglee there was the resident cook, parlour maid and housemaid and rather oddly an eight year old boy lodger from the Isle of Wight, in addition to a gardener and coachman in the cottage and stables.⁵¹ The Land Valuation Survey 1910-15 shows Beedinglee was still in the freehold ownership of E.G. Loder (brother-in-law of Louisa Hubbard) but rented on a three year tenancy to a Mrs. Rutherford for a yearly rental of £50. It was described as a modern brick and tile house, four bedrooms and box room, two servants' rooms, a dressing room, hall, dining room, morning room, study, two staircases and kitchen, scullery, larder and butler's pantry. Outside there was a coach house, stable, garage, grooms room, electric light plant, all valued at £4200 (see figure 6.14).⁵²

With reference to the Land Valuation Survey, it shows that much of the core village of Lower Beeding in about 1911 was owned by E. G. Loder, who would have purchased these properties from the Aldridge estate. Thus Sandygate cottages, The Plough Inn, the Post office shop and three cottages, Fir Tree Villa, Dockers Lodge and Leechpond Cottage, were all owned by E.G. Loder with tenancies which varied from one month to 21 years. Since the 1901 census, the Plough Inn had changed hands to a James Jenkins, who rented it with 15 acres of grassland and timber. Trinity school house was also owned by the Loders and rented from 1903 on a 21 year tenancy to the schoolmaster, E.J. Hill for an annual rent of £27. Brickyard Farm, 61 acres in the centre of the village with stables and hovel were owned freehold by E.G.Loder, plus the Plummers Plain Brickyard, one acre of land with four sheds and two kilns, both farm and brickyard had no other occupier at the time of the Land Valuation Survey. A Gazetteer noted that the Brickyard on the east side of Leechpond Hill went out of use shortly after 1882 when

⁵¹ Kelly, S. (2004) Hubbard, Louisa Maria (1836-1906), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press. Accessible through: www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34030.

⁵² TNA IR58/94086.

the tenant was John Dearing. Its successor, further along Sandygate Lane, called Plummers Plain Brickyard opened in early 1890s with Jason Brewer as the manager, and kept going until the 1930s.⁵³

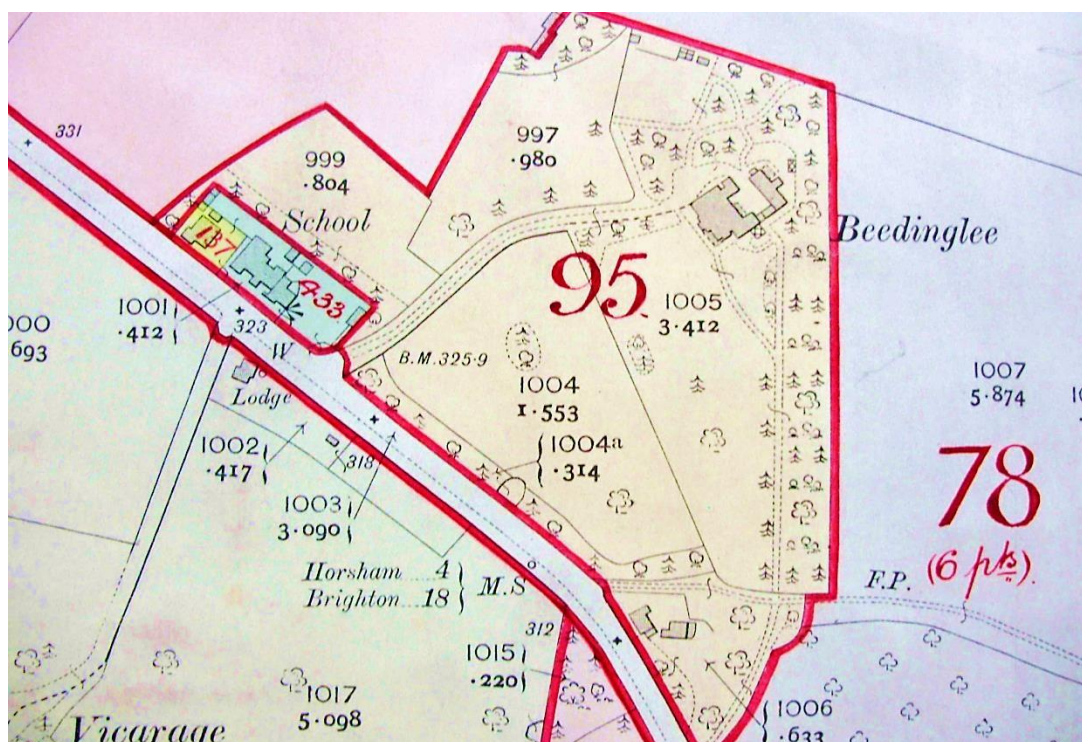


Figure 6.14: Detail of Land Valuation Survey 1910-15 showing plan of Beedinglee and Trinity elementary school. TNA IR124/9/221.

A property to the east of the village called Newells was a part of the Coolhurst estate and the Land Valuation Survey confirms the freehold was owned by Charles R. Scrase-Dickins and occupied by W.S. Graves, who was not resident at the time of the 1901 census as his 21 year lease ran from 1903. Graves is noted in *Kelly's Directory of Sussex 1905* as a Justice of the Peace. Newells was a large mansion and park of 180 acres with a gross value estimated at £20,500. The mansion was described by the assessor as 'modern and in very good condition' and it appeared to be quite large with hall, drawing room, dining room, study, morning room, eight bedrooms and servants accommodation. Outside there were loose boxes, stables, motor garage, coal house,

⁵³ Beswick, M.(2001) *Brickmaking in Sussex, A History and Gazetteer*, Midhurst: Middleton Press, pp. 181-2, and TNA IR58/94086.

electric light plant, pump engine for water, and three additional cottages. These large mansion properties such as Newells and Beedinglee with electricity generators, motor garages and stables appeared to have embraced the latest technology with electricity and the combustion engine, and yet they still had their coachmen, grooms and horses as a mode of transport, although this would not last beyond the Great War.⁵⁴

Evidence points to the fact that both the villages of Colgate and Lower Beeding were dependant on their local wealthy landowners for their initial establishment. Churches and schools established by landowners in these communities became the focal point for growth rather than as a response to growth. Landowners, clergy and state were keen to make sure that an Anglican type of Christianity ‘civilized’ the ‘wild’ population of the Forest. In addition, for landowners the opportunity of church building brought status and a monumental legacy for their families. As can be seen from the census figures population in the Forest did grow, but tailed off after the 1870s leaving the churches and schools of the villages half full.

Perhaps unsurprisingly the majority of the landholdings remained in the hands of the few, despite the large scale sales of the St. Leonard’s Forest estate which, rather than enabling the tenant to buy his home, just transferred large portions of land from one wealthy landholder to another. Mostly the local landowners had a Victorian philanthropic attitude towards the villages, for example, in 1875 the Hubbards built Crabtree Hall, a workmen’s club and library which by 1905 had over 500 books for the education of the workers. Louisa Hubbard herself had strongly promoted teaching as a suitable profession for women, and the local elementary school had been built on land donated by the family next to her home, Beedinglee. The gift of land and funds for village benefit ran through the history of both villages, and was based on ethics of paternalism, service, rights and responsibilities. However, by the early 20th century these ethics were shifting as the larger landowners became more remote from their

⁵⁴ Kelly’s Directory of Sussex, 1905, accessed through www.historicaldirectories.org

estates, and the smaller landowners felt the pinch of falling values of rents and fewer labourers. The old order of landowner, farmer and labourer was changing, the state was becoming more involved in welfare and education, socialist ideas and trade unions were gaining ground. A new type of less deferential worker and a different type of landowner newly wealthy from London business and commerce, more concerned with individuality and private ownership than community, were developing and this brought about an interesting clash between private and public interests which can be seen in the next section.⁵⁵

6.2: Public access v private land

Growth in population and urbanisation was particularly great in the later 19th century. The period from 1851 to 1914 saw the population of England and Wales double, remarkably their living standards doubled as well, while the number of people living in towns trebled. London's population doubled between 1801 and 1831, and again between 1851 and 1901 to reach 6.5 million inhabitants due to both net in-migration and natural increase, so that in the later 19th century it was the world's largest metropolitan centre.⁵⁶ These figures were sustainable due to an increase in industrial output which quadrupled over the same period, and increasing trade, particularly the import of cheap food. There was, however, growing concern in some quarters over the importance of maintaining open spaces in the face of this enormous tide of urbanisation. Along with this was an increasing interest in footpath walking, Macfarlane cites George Barrow in the early 19th century who inspired a surge in footpath following and later writers such as W.H. Hudson and Hilaire Belloc who made walking paths an attractive pastime.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Howkins, 2003, pp. 7-26.

⁵⁶ Black, J. (2009) *London, a History*, Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd., pp. 230-5.

⁵⁷ Blunden, J. & Curry, N. (eds.)(1985) *The Changing Countryside*, Milton Keynes: Open University with Croom Helm Ltd., pp. 72-5, and Macfarlane, R. (2013) *The Old Ways*, London: Penguin Books Ltd., pp. 18-27.

In 1812 Horsham Common had been enclosed, and in 1813 and 1815 a Parliamentary Act allowed landowners to close any footpath if agreed by two JPs at a Quarter Session. Although this does not appear to have been used by the Aldridges on St. Leonard's Forest, it caused concern in its application, particularly in towns, and was condemned by many including Edwin Chadwick, social reformer. The first response was in York in 1824 with the setting up of the Association for the Protection of Ancient Footpaths, this was followed swiftly by a Manchester version, but it was not until 1865 that real progress was made in the protection of rights of way with the founding in London of the Commons Preservation Society who fought long legal battles for public rights over Epping Forest, Banstead Downs and Berkhamstead Common in the 1870s and 80s. At its annual meeting in July 1899 it voted to merge with The National Footpath Preservation Society to become the Commons and Footpath Preservation Society, thereby combining forces to campaign for the protection of open spaces and public access. Short notes that by the 1870s disputes over common rights in English forests, chases and parks was not new, but the middle classes and intellectuals now felt the need for the preservation of open spaces, along with the flora and fauna. The Ashdown Forest case (1876-1882) was another similar type of struggle for access to resources on common land.⁵⁸

The Horsham Centre of the Commons and Footpath Preservation Society had its third annual meeting on 12 June 1901, under the chairmanship of Rev. J.J. Marten in which minutes of the annual report outlined what had been happening that year and the 'grave danger to many public rights of way' in the district, and details of the conclusion to the St. Leonard's Forest footpath dispute.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *The Morning Post*, (London, England) Friday July 14 1899, p. 6 Issue 39659 and Solnit, R. (2001) *Wanderlust, A History of Walking*, London: Verso, pp. 159 – 168, and Short, B. (1999) Conservation, Class and Custom: Lifespace and Conflict in a Nineteenth-century Forest Environment, *Rural History*, Vol. **10.2**, pp. 127-154.

⁵⁹ WSRO MS RD/H024/2/1. The significance of the Horsham Centre as a local subgroup is not clear.

An important response by the Government to public concern regarding access to footpaths and open spaces was the Local Government Act of 1894, Section 26, which stated that a district council, with agreement from the county council, could aid persons in maintaining rights of common where, in their opinion, losing the rights would be prejudicial to the inhabitants of the district. In order to do this the district council could institute or defend any legal proceedings, and in fact take any steps that they felt to be expedient. This allowed Horsham Rural District Council, in concert with the Urban District Council to defend the legal action when the footpaths through St. Leonard's Forest were threatened by their new landowner, Edmund Molyneux, who had recently bought the core of the Aldridge estate, 1731 acres in four lots, when it was put up for sale in 1896.⁶⁰

It was reported in newspapers in May 1899 that certain paths through St. Leonards Forest had been obstructed and pedestrians ordered off the estate. This had been brought to the attention of Horsham urban, rural and parish councils and an inquiry was held on 16 May 1899, in the Town Hall to establish the precedents for the rights of way over 12 footpaths through the Forest. On hearing the oral evidence both for and against, the councils were convinced that the rights of way were correct and should stand. They therefore removed the obstacles in the footpaths, and according to *The Times* court report they had dug earth, filled trenches and pulled down fences. A month later, the Commons and Footpath Preservation Society, Horsham Centre, organised a mass ramble through the Forest with an estimated 120 walkers taking part. According to evidence from Richard Francis, 59, they walked via Herons Copse path past the Grange up to the top of Mick Mills Race and then down past Mill Farm by The Goldings.⁶¹

The response from Molyneux was to instigate proceedings against Horsham Rural District Council in the Chancery Division of the High Court, claiming that the alleged

⁶⁰ Local Government Act 1894, Chapter 73, 56 and 57 Vict. Part II S26 (2)(3).

⁶¹ *The Times*, 19 July 1900, Issue 36198, and and WSRO MS RD/HO24/2/1.

public rights of way did not exist, and thus claiming an injunction restraining the defendants, or their agents, from trespassing and demanding damages for trespass. The case came to the High Court in front of Justice Kekewich on 20 June 1900. It was agreed that documentary evidence could not be supplied, and in fact it later transpired that proof of footpaths stretching back to before Aldridge's occupation was required by law due to the estate being entailed from father to son rather than in fee simple. Such a task was impossible, and so local people were called to give oral evidence as to their knowledge of use of the 12 footpaths in dispute. Not surprisingly, small details of everyday life were given regarding the work and leisure practices which give a glimpse into Forest life as far back as the late 18th century.⁶² The oral evidence also gives credence to the *The First Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture 1867-8* reports of leasing and subleasing Forest land which had led to a large number of cottages and turf huts each on an acre of land which had appeared in the Forest.⁶³

James Langley, 66, stated in Court to be a grocer and dealer living in Colgate, (the 1901 census a year later has him living at the Mars Chapel on his own means), said that his father had worked for Thomas Broadwater at Holmbush and that there used to be more people living in Colgate, and that he could show where 50 little farms had been given up. When asked if a good deal of wood had been taken from the estate he agreed and said that also a lot had also grown up, but it had been let to run to ruin and the little farms cut off and gone. He also thought that the footpaths were 10 times better 30 years ago. Edward Gates, 60, carpenter and steam sawyer, said his father worked for Squire Aldridge as a woodman, and his grandfather as warrener on the estate. He noted that 'a great many people lived in the Forest years ago, not in houses but in huts' and he remembered that as a boy these people were charcoal burners and small farmers. Alfred Greenfield, 57, said that before 1881 there had been a lot of

⁶² HM MSS 2917 1-2 which are two note books written by C.J.B. Hurst, Barrister-at-law, who observed the case for local landowner R.H.Hurst, MP, and recorded evidence from 23 local people, and also collected newspaper cuttings of the trial, which are not individually referenced, and WSRO MS RD/HO24/2/1.

⁶³ P.P. 1867-8, **XVII**, p. 82.

little holdings on the eastern side of the estate and these tenants used the footpaths, although others did as well. Thomas Gent, 77, thought that by far the greater number of people using the footpaths were not tenants and gave examples of people he knew who had used Mick Mills Race in the course of deliveries as there was a waggon road that linked to the Race. However, he also said that 'in those days there were about four times as many people in the Forest as now, I have known 25 houses, or huts, down where there are none now'. Many of the farms he said had 'gone destitute' and the roads kept in order by the farmers had been left alone. William Gates, 47, said he knew most of the people of the farms and they had to use the footpaths to get to Horsham as did people from Handcross.⁶⁴

The evidence clearly shows the footpaths were used for work, such as for the carting of dog food and bird feed to the Kennels by New Lodge before the Grange was built. Underwood and heath was carted past the Grange and through Spurs Orchard. Bricks were carted to Colgate and Crawley, and apples were carted from Slaughtam to Roffey all on the footpaths. William Gates said that he had seen carts on the Race and knew that they were not connected with the estate. A Blacksmith, James Mitchell, 49, remembered shoeing horses for Colonel Aldridge and walking all over the estate via the footpaths, and as a boy he had accompanied a vet on his work through the footpaths. Labourers spoke of using the paths to get to work cutting wood, harvesting, tending birds, and digging potatoes while Jesse Norman, 53, who lived at Holmbush potteries was sent as a boy to collect debts at Plummers Plain, Nuthurst, Leonardslee and other places and used the footpaths. William Jupp, 45, distinguished between the keepers and watchers on the estate who had a right and duty to be there and the general public. Several people mentioned the keepers but no one seemed to know how many there were. However, Alfred Greenfield said he had been employed as a keeper and walked the whole of Molyneux's property, saying that the keepers' paths were between the central paths and were used for feeding and shooting. Jesse Norman had said that Colonel Aldridge kept beagles for hunting hares and rabbits, and pheasants were also kept on the estate. Laurence Lovegrove, 77, remembered his

⁶⁴ HM MSS 2917 1-2.

father's body being carried from Roffey through Hampers Lane, past Sun Oak to St. John's Coolhurst for burial, and Edward Gates remembered a corpse being carried to the church from Whitevane pond via the footpaths. The only woman recorded by Hurst to give evidence, Elizabeth Wickham, 46, said she had lived all her life in the Forest and walked to Sunday school at St. John's as a child. She also said she frequently used two different paths through the Forest to get to Horsham, and that others had gone shopping to Horsham with her.⁶⁵

The footpaths were also used for leisure purposes, as noted by Albert Etheridge, 46, who worked in the brickyard on the south side of Forest Road, west of Colgate, and used the paths he said for pleasure. He admitted to playing in a summerhouse on the estate many times as a boy. Several pieces of evidence were given referring to pleasant times had in the summerhouse, including courting. It appeared to be on Herons Copse path which ran from New Lodge-Grange-Mick Mills Race, and was approached through a keeper's garden. David Price, 42, a stationer and printer interested in entomology, said that when he was a boy he remembered it as a favourite walk; people would take refreshments and go into the summerhouse. He told the Court he had gained permission from the Aldridges to pursue his hobby and remembered capturing a rare moth in the neighbourhood of Roosthole pond. He said that on his walks through the Forest he met people he knew from Horsham, London and Brighton and various other places.⁶⁶

The Lily Beds were another popular destination for local walkers. William Simmons, 61, who had been a gardener to Colonel Aldridge for over eight years, said that when the lilies were in flower he had to stop people from pulling up their roots, but they were a great sight with acres of them in bloom. Richard Francis, 59, a shoemaker, said he had been in the Horsham Union Workhouse at Roffey when he was eight year old, and remembered using the paths in the Forest for pleasure. He also told the Court that the

⁶⁵ HM MSS 2917 1-2.

⁶⁶ HM MSS 2917 1-2.

workhouse children used to bathe in Whitevane pond; he did not know whether the Squire had given permission, but a schoolmaster accompanied them and those who would not go in were thrown in. Reading the notes on this oral evidence, the impression is of footpaths constantly busy with people, and with Mick Mills Race being used as almost a road or track from north to south through the Forest (see figure 6.15).⁶⁷



Figure 6.15: Post card in author's own collection of Mick Mills Race with clear straight track, date of post mark on reverse unclear but, given Forestry Commission planting, after 1919.

Up to and indeed following, the time of the Court hearing, negotiations had been progressing between the Joint Committee of the district councils and Molyneux. He had accepted the footpath from Goldings Bridge up past the Sun Oak and his carriageway to New Lodge, or St. Leonard's, and out at Upper Park pond towards the town, and by this point the Joint Committee had prepared a map of the estate, edged in blue, with the footpaths accepted by the councils marked in red. It is not clear what the green lines indicated although they were clearly paths of some sort (see figure 6.16). Molyneux proposed conceding two more paths but the council felt it could not

⁶⁷ HM MSS 2917 1-2.

let all the others go, and made a counter proposal. However, this was not accepted and the Court sat for five days hearing evidence. At this point another offer was made by Molyneux, and with further negotiations by the council for adding a small but important footpath linking Town Copse with a footpath through Leechpool Woods towards Horsham, this was accepted. A second map was made by the council to confirm the footpaths which would be accepted by both parties, although surprisingly this left out Mick Mills Race (see figure 6.17). The conclusion to the dispute in the form of this compromise came on 18th July 1900 when the defending council informed the Judge of the agreement reached.⁶⁸

At the annual meeting of the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society meeting, Horsham Centre, on 12 June 1901, the conclusion to the dispute was outlined and it was hoped that:

‘a portion of this old Forest might be secured for the public before the inevitable alternative of enclosure for private villa and paddock occupation shall have monopolised its entire area, and have irreparably destroyed its wild and sylvan character’

The Secretary commented that it had been difficult to get evidence given that Colonel Aldridge invited all and sundry to walk all the paths, and ‘had a great fancy for shifting paths, and as far as one could make out there was scarcely a path in the whole Forest he had not shifted from one line to another’. Added to this was Robert Hurst’s evidence that there was a ring fence at sometime around the Forest, in which he may have been referring to John Speed’s map of 1610, or perhaps early references to Lord Erskine’s Holmbush estate. The Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society felt that given these problems the compromise was a good outcome.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ WSRO MS RD/HO/2/1

⁶⁹ WSRO MS RD/HO/2/1

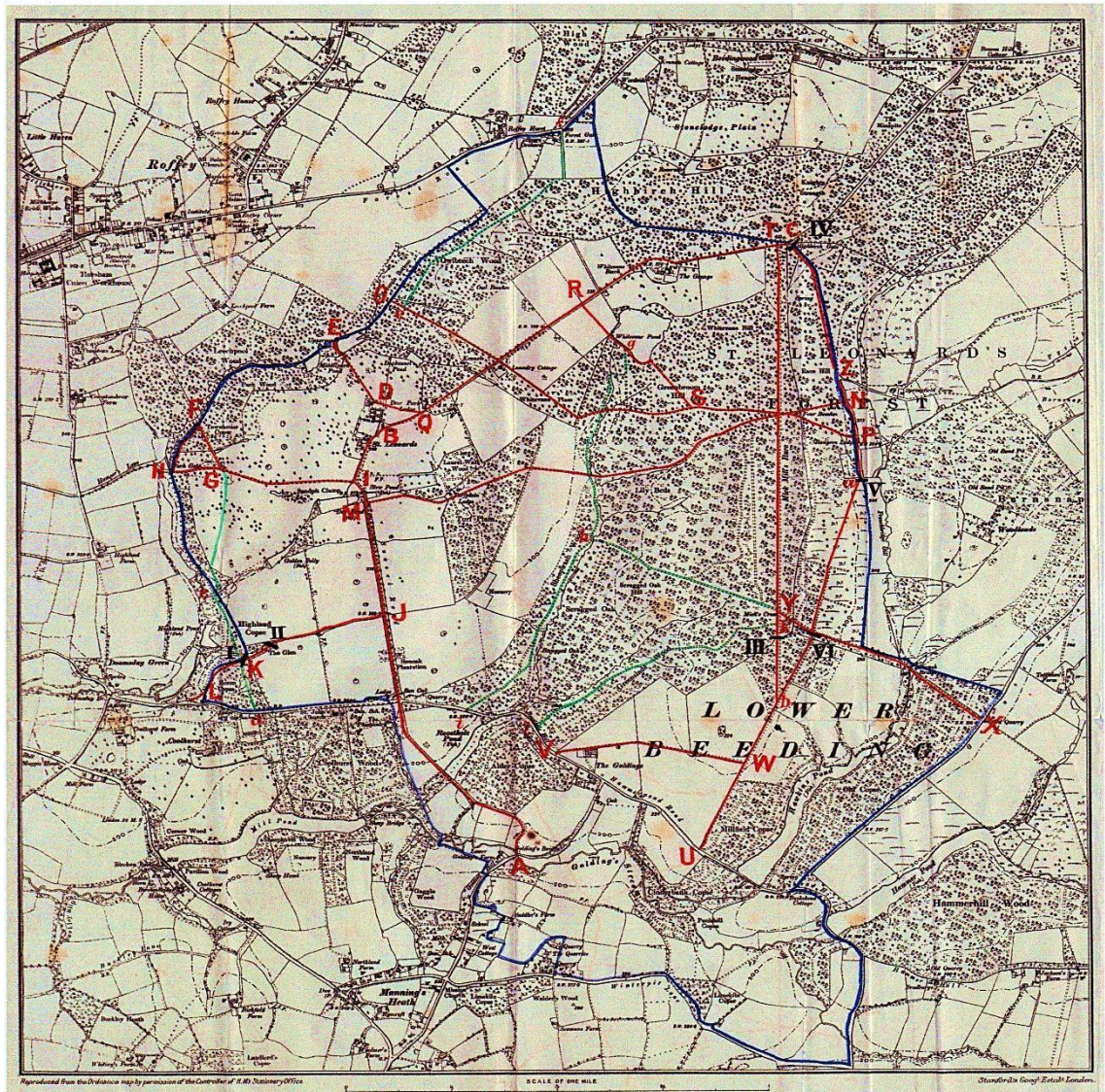


Figure 6.16: Local authority map indicating footpaths agreed after initial local enquiry. Footpaths identified by letters. WSRO MS RD/HO24/2/1.

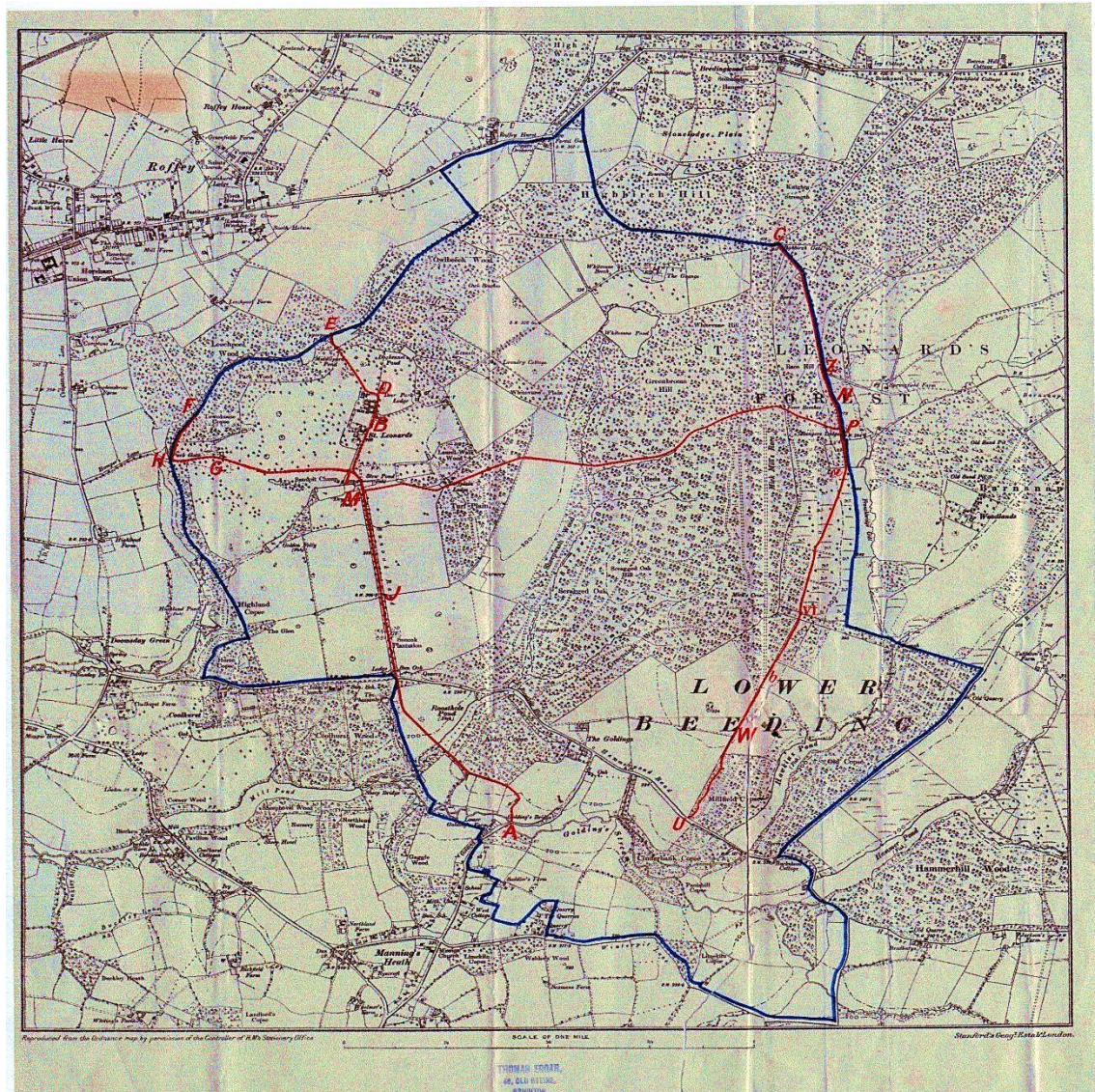


Figure 6.17: Local authority map indicating footpaths agreed after negotiations with Molyneux bringing court case to a close. WSRO MS RD/HO24/2/1.

Edmund Molyneux remains a difficult figure to find, not assisted by the fact that he is referred to as both Edmund and Edward in official documentation. He does not appear on the 1901 or 1911 census in the Horsham area, however in letters to Robert Hurst at the time of the footpath dispute he has the title of Captain so it is likely he would have been caught up in the First World War, from which he may, or may not, have returned. The Land Valuation Survey of 1910-15 shows him as the freehold owner of a large portion of the Forest, notes of inspection were dated at 18.2.1914. He held onto Forest Grange with 1307 acres, the Home Farm with smithy, saw mills, barn and carpenter shop, and 185 acres of Forest land with cattle yard and shed. No other occupier is noted. As the Land Valuation Survey allowed landowners to offset tax by listing Rights of Way through their land it is interesting that a large number of footpaths were still there in 1914 with 28 claimed through Forest Grange land. The Land Valuation field books also showed that Harold Dennis had bought New Lodge or St. Leonard's with 122 acres, freehold. Also noted is tax relief on 30 footpaths on this land and 25 on an adjoining 53 acres, clearly more than the 12 that were agreed at the footpath dispute. Perhaps old habits die hard for the people living in the Forest, and the landscape of the Forest paths had not in fact been much changed by this dispute.⁷⁰

The contrasting evidence from the official census and oral remembrance shows two sides of development in the Forest landscape during the 19th century. There was the early leasing, and almost uncontrolled subletting of tracts of land in the St. Leonard's Forest estate which had encouraged small farms and huts, or hovels, to be thrown up on this marginal land. Such temporary structures left little evidence and they and their occupants melted away as the agricultural boom years from 1815 to the 1870s gave way to depression. Nervousness amongst the upper classes and the clergy as to what was really going on in the Forest, plus their anxiety of losing potential congregations to the nonconformists, encouraged the building of churches and schools by the local landowning patrons. It was this that effectively created the villages of Colgate and Lower Beeding in the Forest, which then attracted new residents to settle in a rural

⁷⁰ 1911 census accessible through: <http://interactive.ancestry.co.uk> and Knight, J.(2008) Horsham's History, Volume 3 1880-1913, Horsham District Council, p. 269, and WSRO Hurst MS ACC 3296/146 and TNA IR58/94086.

area with good access to London, Horsham and Brighton. The final chapter will look at some of these ideas in the conclusion to the study.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

*The trees encountered on a country stroll
Reveal a lot about a country's soul
A small grove massacred to the last ash,
An oak with heart-rot, give away the show:
..... A culture is no better than its woods.*

W.H. Auden, from *Bucolics II: Woods*, 1952.¹

At the beginning of this research the main question to be answered is ‘What were the social and economic factors through which St. Leonard’s Forest, Horsham, changed from a devalued heath and secondary woodland in 1750, to a highly valued area of private estates with gardens, forest and lakes by 1914?’ It is a question that has ranged over a large area, both literally and metaphorically, with uncertain boundaries and paths to explore that could take one away from the main area of study. As explained in Chapter 2 ‘Methodology and Sources’, it was necessary to set the physical boundaries to the Forest, as well as the two villages, due to the uncertainty of historical boundaries, and in order to contain the volume of research. Although limited within these self-imposed boundaries, the research has pulled together the disparate elements of a history of landscape settlement, ownership and use of resources in a specific Sussex Wealden forest, St. Leonard’s Forest. This Forest has not been dealt with before as a coherent local history or landscape study. There have, inevitably, been social and environmental areas that could have been explored further, however this current study provides a new basis for further research into wider aspects of St. Leonard’s Forest, and indeed forests of the Sussex Weald Forest Ridge, through comparison, micro histories and even other disciplines, as mentioned later in this chapter.

¹ Mendelson, E. (ed.) (1979) *W. H. Auden, Selected Poems*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., pp. 204-6.

As noted in Chapter 2, this thesis sits within the interdisciplinary school of Landscape Studies which endeavours to uncover the kinds of social, economic and environmental influences which structure the particular character of the landscape, and how this develops over time. Thus researching the social, economic and cultural impacts of local human activity on a landscape is one of many legitimate approaches, and the one which this study takes. In doing so the study has found that the attitudes of the landowners, the social context of ownership, resource use, memory and meaning associated with living in a forest landscape has proved of importance in shaping the changes of this specific forest landscape.

Five secondary questions were asked in order to unpick the main question, and to focus on the research strategy needed to be undertaken to understand the history of the Forest and its residents over two and a half centuries. The study period began in 1750 and so the first task was to uncover what was the character of the Forest in the mid-18th century. It was necessary therefore to look back at the ravages which the iron industry had wrought on the Forest in the 16th century, and the subsequent large scale felling of timber trees through Royal warrants. Where does one begin with exploring the impact of human activity on a landscape? A forest is a palimpsest written by generation after generation responding to the forest as they find it following previous human activity. Daniels and Cosgrove suggest landscape is less of a palimpsest whose authentic meanings can be 'read' through correct techniques and theories, and more of a computer screen whose meaning can be 'created, extended, altered, elaborated and finally obliterated by the merest touch of a button'. Thus meaning and interpretation can change but the facts remain that the rabbit warrens of the later 18th century Forest would not have come about without the iron industry moving north, and the subsequent over felling, over grazing, poor drainage, and profit in rabbit meat and fur. A modern, ecologically aware, interpretation might emphasise that the clear warning voices against destroying a sustainable well-timbered

environment were ignored by those focussed on immediate returns from timber, with the inevitable consequence of a degraded landscape.²

Although archival evidence of 18th century rabbit warrens was limited, new technology in the form of archaeological Lidar investigations in 2009-12 confirmed remains of pillow mounds and boundary banks which were particularly informative for this study. Today it is difficult to grasp the size and importance of the rabbit warrens of St. Leonard's Forest with mid-20th century plantings of Scots and Corsican pine obscuring their contours. However, the study has clearly shown that the centre of the Forest had degenerated into bare heathland useful for the production of rabbits, until the proliferation of wild rabbits and changes to the poaching laws made rabbit meat much cheaper, new drainage techniques improved the soil, and returns on agricultural production improved.

How had the French and Napoleonic wars of 1793 - 1815 and the enclosure of the Common impacted on the Forest? These secondary questions were asked because it was assumed such major events as war and land enclosures would leave their mark on the Forest and its people. However, this did not appear to be the case. It was useful to consider the juxtaposition of Horsham Common so near to the Forest, almost co-terminus to the west, and wrapping around the northern and eastern side of Horsham in a crescent shape. The enclosure of the Common by Act of Parliament in 1812 was mainly for political purposes engineered by the Duke of Norfolk as the burgesses of the town had a parliamentary vote as well as rights of herbage and pannage on the Common. The Common was subsequently parcelled up and sold off, mainly to the Duke of Norfolk and Robert Hurst MP. However, St. Leonard's Forest was already divided up, enclosed and owned and thus not subject to new enclosure, so it was the Common that took the full impact of the change from open commons to enclosed private ownership. Likewise the Napoleonic Wars had little impact on the Forest, it

² Daniels, S. & Cosgrove, D. (eds.) (1988) Introduction: Iconography and Landscape. *The Iconography of Landscape*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-10.

was the Common that had been used for camps and training and the influx of waged men at the turn of the 19th century brought some prosperity to Horsham town. The agricultural boom of the Napoleonic war years did encourage two lessees to divide the 3000 acres of Forest under their control into small tracts of land allowing poor tenanted farms and hovels to be created, until the reality of the difficult and unsuitable soil contributed to their failure as noted in the *Employment in Agriculture Report of 1867-8* and oral evidence given in the footpath dispute of 1900.

The next query the author posed was how far the cultural appreciation of the picturesque encouraged a new interest in the landscape of the Forest and the subsequent planting of gardens and parks in the Forest. An appreciation of British wild and wooded landscape known as the 'picturesque' became popular in the early to mid-18th century which looked on landscape with a painterly eye, concerned with the composition of the scene. Later in the 19th century aspiring modern industrialists and traders were looking to invest in social capital and status by purchasing small 'picturesque' estates, and St. Leonard's Forest was eminently suitable both topographically and geographically, with a touch of the wild or sublime. Thomas Broadwood designed his parkland with echoes of an earlier style of the Italianate, which included avenues, towers, statues and prospects although by the time he had completed it, the plain landscape parks of Capability Brown had come into vogue and out again, as those with estates were beginning to return to elements of the picturesque, followed by the gardenesque. Thus there was variety and mixture of garden landscape style in St. Leonard's Forest. There was the persistence of an older 18th century style at Holmbush, and an early appreciation of the picturesque, alongside the later 19th century American gardens, arboretum and wild woodland style of Coolhurst and Leonardslee.³

³ Everson, P. and Williamson, T. (1998) Gardens and designed landscapes, Everson, P. and Williamson, T. (eds) *The Archaeology of Landscape*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 139-165.

It is difficult to assess how much an aesthetic appreciation of a garden style impacted landowners choices, but lifestyle and personal interest appeared to weigh more. Brandon points to the Victorian appetite for nature as a contrast to the smoke and grime of London, less than 50 miles from the Weald, a selling point well made by the 19th century sales particulars of the Forest estates. As roads and rail opened up the Weald it was seen as a restorative natural environment in which to live. The fact that the acidic sandy soil was suitable for gardens, rather than agriculture, encouraged the sale of small estates to the middle classes with a view to building villas set in attractive gardens. The new exotic plants and trees being introduced in the early 19th century grew well in the Wealden conditions, and this was a further encouragement to naturalists and gardeners to create beautiful gardens, as well as pioneer knowledge in the growing, propagating and hybridising of the new plants.⁴

The study has shown there was a close neighbourhood of amateur naturalists and plantsmen with the money and free time to indulge their interests in hybridising and experimenting with conditions suitable for the varied garden plants arriving from different parts of the world. There were the Loders at Leonardslee, High Beeches and Wakehurst, Frederick du Cane Godman at South Lodge, Millais at Compton's Brow, Stephenson Clarke at Borde Hill and the Messels at Nymans. Sometime later, and not so well documented or remembered was Charles Robert Scrase Dickins and the Coolhurst woodland. It is interesting to consider how far these keen gardeners and naturalists influenced each other in design, choice of plants and scientific enquiry, and whether the area around St. Leonard's Forest and the western part of the Wealden Forest Ridge was particularly rich at this time with innovative gardeners and naturalists. It should be remembered that the influential gardener and writer, William Robinson (1838-1935) lived not far away at Gravetye Manor near East Grinstead.⁵

⁴ Brandon, P. (2010) *The Discovery of Sussex*, Andover: Phillimore and Co. Ltd., pp. 13-22, (hereafter Brandon, 2010)

⁵ Brandon, 2010, pp. 137-146.

The last of the secondary questions was to find out who lived in the Forest, where and how they lived, whether landowner, farmer or villager, through the century and a half under consideration. A study of the five main private estates emphasised the importance of the interests and attitudes of the individual owners through time, and the impact this had on the Forest landscape. Those that used their estate as an opportunity to indulge their interests in horticulture and naturalist enquiry, contrasted with those that used it as a sporting estate or source of income rather than capital, to sell or lease as required by circumstance. The thread of paternalism runs strongly through this history, and one is struck by the almost medieval largesse of the Aldridge family involving the whole town of Horsham during the celebrations of the coming of age of Robert Aldridge in 1822. It should be noted, however that this was not that unusual, a similar celebration of coming of age by another Horsham family, the Eversfields of Denne Park, occurred in 1843. The Eversfield party, as described by Henry Burstow, included the whole parish of Horsham, with 3000 people invited to games and fireworks, with dinners for the tradespeople and balls for the gentry.⁶

Of increased significance for the landscape was the later Victorian paternalism, hand in glove with the established church, and demonstrated by gifts of money and land to set up churches, schools and a library for the working classes close to the estates. These actions effectively created two villages, Colgate and Lower Beeding, firstly by establishing, and secondly by continuing the patronage of important elements of village life. When considering the impact of paternalism one would be tempted to look at the 'close' villages where the pattern had been set early by the power and control of landowners over their estate villages and parish vestry. It was therefore interesting to see such paternalism at work in the later Victorian and Edwardian villages.

Horn noted that common perceptions of Victorian villages were impressionistic and sentimental, and so she set out in her comparative research of eight Victorian villages

⁶ Burstow, H. (1911) *Reminiscences of Horsham being Recollections of Henry Burstow, The Celebrated Bellringer and Songsinger*, Horsham: The Free Christian Church Book Society, pp 45-6.

using the 1871 decennial census, to uncover the historical reality of villages. She wrote that there was scope for greater use of the census in this way, and there would certainly be scope for further research in comparing the two villages of Colgate and Lower Beeding with other villages in Sussex to find out how common or unusual their establishment and development was.⁷

Of particular value has been the building up of a picture of these two communities over the period from 1841 to 1901 through the census, and then to read the recollections of some of the people living in and around the Forest at the turn of the 20th century recorded during a Court hearing of the Footpath Dispute. It is perhaps a valuable aspect of this research in that it assists in the dismantling of common assumptions about English forests and villages. It was sobering to remember that only 100 years and the Welfare State separate the current generation from the appalling poverty that could be found in villages such as that in Colgate. For those that survived the long working life of labourers in both villages was clear, from childhood into old age, and with no state pension and no savings, the alternative was the Union Workhouse in Horsham.

The young adults were not as present as one would imagine, they would be working away from home in domestic service, and families were smaller than the Victorian stereotype would suggest. Those living in the Forest and the two villages moved more frequently than one would assume. They moved house to gain employment, and local youngsters left Colgate and Lower Beeding while others moved into these villages for domestic service. From oral reports villages often walked through and into the Forest for both work and leisure.

Lower Beeding grew larger than Colgate and from an examination of occupations it seems likely that the large and successful gardens and houses of the Loders, Godmans

⁷ Horn, P. (1982) Victorian villages from census returns, *The Local Historian* Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 25-32

and Scrase-Dickins provided work, and a developing village life around church, school and library. Colgate was more dependent on Holmbush and Buchan Hill as New Lodge began to be sold, small independent farmers increased together with those living on their own means. The railway and Horsham town were less than five miles away from Colgate and would have provided services not available in the village, thus perhaps drawing people there to live, such as the Langley family. In Colgate the older skills of charcoal burning and brick making survived into the new century, alongside newer professions such as the wine merchant, and at Buchan Hill, Phillip F.R. Saillard, the ostrich feather importer catering to the Victorian fashion for feather boas and mourning plumes. However, growth in Colgate was slower than Lower Beeding until more incomers after the world wars.

One cannot look at the 1901 and 1911 censuses without being aware of the impending two world wars that would claim the lives of the many children and young men of the families recorded. However, reading the names on two memorials, one in St. Saviours Church, Colgate, and the other in Holy Trinity at Lower Beeding, one is struck by how few names do in fact concur with the 1901 census, perhaps suggesting a continuing movement of people in and out of the two villages. For example, a particularly detailed memorial to those who lost their lives in World War I stands in the parish church of the Holy Trinity at Lower Beeding (see figure 7.1), from this only one name, John G. Feist, can be positively identified from Lower Beeding village of the right age in the 1901 census.

John G. Feist from the 1st Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment was killed in action in Mesopotamia on 25th January, 1917, at the age of 25. The 1901 census shows that he had lived with his father, a warehouseman, his mother, six siblings and a 75 year old lodger at Church Cottage, next to the Plough Inn in Lower Beeding. The memorial lists 23 deaths from 1914-1919, and the last honour is to Major General Spencer W. Scrase-Dickins CB, AM, younger brother of Charles Robert Scrase-Dickins of Coolhurst, who died from the effects of exhaustion due to active service on 23 October 1919, aged

57.⁸ Another striking memorial in Holy Trinity church is a plaque and two stained glass windows to the memory of Captain Robert Egerton Loder, only son of Sir Edmund and Lady Loder, wounded in the battle of Gaza, died on 29 March 1917, aged 30 and buried at Khan Yunus in the Holy Land.



Figure 7.1: Author's photograph of WWI memorial in Holy Trinity Church, Lower Beeding, courtesy of the vicar, The Rev. Dr Mark Betson. Taken April, 2013.

Similarly, in St. Saviours church at Colgate on a much smaller wooden memorial to the dead of World War I, only one name William John Ashby can be found in the 1901 census when he was a small boy of five years old living at the Colgate public house, The Dragon. There are eight names altogether, two appear to be a father and son, Walter and Frederick Allingham, farmers from Hopper Farm on the Holmbush estate, north of

⁸ CB, Companion of the Order of the Bath for military meritorious service, AM Albert Medal which became the George Cross, the highest award for gallantry for action not in the face of the enemy (information from Major Mark Scrase Dickens, 26.3.13).

Colgate village on the Crawley Road and not within the bounds of the village for this study.

Taking the longer view of the landscape of the Forest, it is clear that ownership of the Forest dictated its character, shape and use. At the beginning of this period of study in 1750, the Forest had been regarded as a source of quick money through timber and grazing with no regard to the sustainability of the large timber trees. The woodland hence deteriorated into heathland, important in itself for biodiversity, but a changed landscape. Agricultural improvement was tried and failed and so the production of rabbits became a good economic option. When the price of rabbit meat and fur devalued due to wild rabbit being widely available, agriculture was attempted again with new techniques of drainage, enclosure and better access. The acres at the centre of the Forest were leased and sublet to small aspirational farmers, but the geology and topography were against them, and soon the economics were as well.

The impact of proximity to London was important as the city's growth was unstoppable from the mid-18th century, swallowing towns and villages to form one great world metropolis. It pulled people in for work through the improving communications of rail and road, but also allowed the wealthier business managers and merchants to escape from the city to the rural landscapes of the Sussex Weald. The picturesque setting of St. Leonard's Forest and soil to cultivate trees, rhododendrons and other acid loving exotics gave the Forest a real value to this new class of landowner. They, and their friends and families brought to the Forest typically Victorian interests of collecting and experimenting with exotic plants and animals. Their philanthropy and paternalist feelings provided churches and schools for their workers, which effectively created the 19th century Victorian villages of Colgate and Lower Beeding.⁹

⁹ Brandon, P. (1984) Wealden Nature and the Role of London in the nineteenth century artistic imagination, *Journal of Historical Geography*, **10.1**, pp. 75-104.

How different were these developments in comparison to the other Wealden ridge forests? Worth Forest, which included Tilgate Forest to the south and which later became known as just Tilgate Forest, was virtually coterminous with St. Leonard's Forest, only the boundaries between the rapes of Bramber and Lewes separating them, so there are more similarities with St. Leonard's Forest in development than with other Sussex forests such as Ashdown. Ashdown Forest was situated east of the Ouse in the next rape of Pevensey, and according to the *Victoria County History* it was the largest and most important of all the Sussex forests.¹⁰

All three forests had a history of iron production, with Worth Forest furnace at the time of ownership by Sir Thomas Seymour making cannon and ordnance in large quantities. In the north of Worth Forest was the wild heathland of Copthorne Common, known for its lawless smugglers and horse stealers, close as it was to the London to Brighton road which cut through the forest. Two other large areas of heathland are noted on the Old Series OS map of 1813 as Highbeech Warren to the south and Old House Warren to the east, so rabbits followed iron as in St. Leonard's Forest. Budgen's earlier map of 1724 shows 3 mansions in the forest area, Crabbett Park, Rowfant House and Fen Place. They were farming gentry and businessmen similar to those around St. Leonard's Forest in the 18th century. The Bysshe family of Fen Place married into the Shelleys of Field Place, Horsham, producing the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley in 1792. Socialising amongst the families was not surprising given that Horsham was the market town for Worth, Ifield and Crawley rather than East Grinstead.¹¹

Worth Forest was divided into estates by a private enclosure act in 1828 which began to attract London incomers. Worth Park House on an estate of 2000 acres and including 15 farms was bought by Sir Joseph Montefiore a wealthy London Banker in

¹⁰ Page, W. (ed.) (1973) *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex, II*, London: The Institute of Historical Research by University of London, p. 297. (hereafter VCH II).

¹¹ Gwynne, P. (1990) *A History of Crawley*, Chichester: Phillimore and Co. Ltd., p. 90. (hereafter Gwynne, 1990).

about 1850, while Crabbett Park had been inherited by Wilfred Scawen Blunt in 1873 and became a well-known stud for Arabian horses. By examining an 1855 directory Gwynne writes that Worth had the greatest proportion of gentry and greatest population growth in comparison to Crawley and Ifield. Crawley developed an urban society on a major road and rail route while Ifield remained a rural farming community. There are similarities to St. Leonard's Forest not only in the geology and early history, but in the later influence of London, improved communications and incoming gentry, although individual personalities and their interests make a difference, such as in St. Leonards Forest where the church and individual patronage created new Victorian villages in the heart of the Forest.¹²

The development of Ashdown Forest shows more of a departure from St. Leonard's Forest and Worth, or Tilgate Forest. It was high open heathland further from London, with poorer communications routes, and a complex system of ownership and rights of ancient origin with different groups enjoying different rights. There were many abuses and disputes regarding rights, with squatters and cottages and those with no rights at all encroaching on and taking resources from the forest. This escalated in the late 19th century, and climaxed in 1876 with the 7th Earl De La Warr of Buckhurst Park and Lord of the Manor of Duddleswell, informing the commoners, who included both gentry and cottagers, that the practice of cutting litter on the forest was forbidden. This was challenged, depositions taken, and the case won by the commoners on appeal. The depositions illustrate that for many their rural life was very dependent on the forest for economic and social survival, as Short wrote, it made the difference between poverty and pauperism. A very different 18th and 19th century development from both St. Leonard's Forest and Worth due to its geographic position, lack of good rail and road links to London, and commoners rights.¹³

¹² VCH II, p. 312-3 and Gwynn, 1990, p. 117.

¹³ Short, B. (ed.) (1997) *The Ashdown Forest Dispute 1876-1882*, Lewes: Sussex Record Society, **80**, pp. 26-8, 34-9, and Short, B. (2004) Environmental Politics, custom and personal testimony: memory and lifespace on the late Victorian Ashdown Forest, Sussex, *Journal of Historical Geography*, **30**, pp. 470-495.

Changes of the St. Leonard's Forest landscape continued into the 20th century with large purchases of the Forest by the local authority and Forestry Commission. World War II had more of an impact on the Forest than the Great War, with the setting up of camps for Canadian troops and prisoner of war camps, the bombing of Colgate, and the encroachment into the Forest of private houses, all altering the Forest landscape yet again. The history of the Forest continues and a study of the 20th century Forest landscape would make sense for further research.

In retrospect one is struck, possibly from a 21st century perspective, how much has been taken from the Forest. It has been dug for iron, stone and clay, its ghylls dammed and its timber of oak and beech felled, its heathland has been planted over with pine and suppressed, its archaeological remains and lily beds have been torn up by logging machinery and its peace shattered by motor cross in what was New Lodge's laurel walk. No wonder it can be an uncomfortable Forest in which to walk, a concept picked up by a branch of psychology called terrapsychology. This rejects the objectifying of the earth, of use only as a source of resources for humanity but looks at it as a living ecosystem which impinges on the human psyche in a positive or negative way. These are recognised as feelings, dreams and archetypes, such as the dragon and devil that appear so frequently in the myths of St. Leonard's Forest. Earlier writers from different disciplines laid the foundations for these concepts, such as the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan who explored the relationship of different types of human fear in varied landscapes, and the historian Simon Schama in part 1 of his book *Landscape and Memory* who explored historical attitudes and feelings to European woods and forests. A psychological approach adds another layer of depth to the two way influence of landscape and human activity.¹⁴

¹⁴ Chalquist, C. (2007) *Terrapsychology: Reengaging the Soul of Place*. New Orleans, USA: Spring Journal Books, pp.53-89, and Tuan, Y-F. (1979,2013) *Landscapes of Fear*, Minneapolis, MN (USA): University of Minnesota Press, and Schama, S. (1995,2004) *Landscape and Memory*, Hammersmith: HarperCollins Publishers.

Macfarlane describes forests as ‘places of correspondence, of call and answer’ echoing this psychological concept of a two way influence. He suggested that if woods and forests disappear it is not only unique habitats that disappear but our unique memories and forms of thought. Woods, he wrote, ‘kindle new ways of being and cognition in people’ and this can urge their minds in different ways.¹⁵ In his later book *The Old Ways* he gives the example of this in thoughts about the effects of nature and landscape on the poet Edward Thomas, of whom he wrote ‘trees, birds, rocks and paths cease to be merely objects of contemplation, and instead become actively and convivially present, enabling understanding that would be possible nowhere else, under no other circumstances’, thus emphasising the psychological importance of place, of particular landscapes, to individuals.¹⁶

Much of this thesis has focused on how human activity has impacted the landscape of St. Leonard’s Forest, how individual and community attitudes and ambitions, social and economic, changed the Forest. It is of course more difficult to ascertain how the Forest impacted those same people. However, the author hopes that this thesis forms the basis for more research, for example, there could be opportunities to study micro histories of the villages and their people, local horticultural biographies, 20th century Forest development, comparisons with other Sussex forests, further landscape archaeology and perhaps an interesting terrapsychology study.

¹⁵ Macfarlane, R. (2007) *The Wild Places*, London: Granta Books, pp. 85-111.

¹⁶ Macfarlane, R. (2013) *The Old Ways*, London: Penguin Books Ltd., p. 341.



Figure 7.2: Author's photograph of new dragon bench, carved by O'Neill, situated on the northern end of Mick Mills Race in St. Leonard's Forest, dated April, 2013.

'You have said; but whether wisely or no, let the forest judge'

From Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act 3, ii.

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Ordnance Survey Explorer 134 Crawley and Horsham, 1:25,000 scale. Edition A Revised 1997. Crown Copyright.

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6. Personal Communication

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